THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS

M. E. DODD

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
presented by

DR. GEORGE E. HARRIS

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS

REV. M. E. DODD, A.B., D.D.

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BY

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Author of "Jesus is Coming to Earth Again," "Jesus, the Lion," etc.

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
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THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS. II

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TO

EMMA SAVAGE DODD

WHOSE PRAYER LIFE
HAS BEEN A SOURCE OF UNFAILING BLESSING

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INTRODUCTION

Prayer is a most engaging subject. The possibilities of prayer are beyond enumeration. We are encouraged to pray for our temporal needs. "Give us this day our daily bread" is a temporal as well as a heart cry. "Our Father" is the longing for companionship and paternal comradeship. The hunger of the soul is satisfied. Eternal praise is on our lips; humbleness of spirit is wrought within us; boldness of approach is encouraged; ideals are inspired; and walking with God is cultivated by prayer. It is the one universal appeal which our Father never denies.

What Jesus said about prayer and how He encouraged His followers to pray, have been the theme of His people in all ages. This theme has cultivated the atmosphere of prayerfulness. Historians have lingered to record His words; exegetes have expounded His teaching; human experiences have attested His meaning; and here poets have raised their loftiest hymns.

But our Brother Dodd has, with great spiritual intuition, emphasised a phase of our Lord's prayer life which has generally been overlooked. Others have told how our Lord prayed and what He said about prayer. Dr. Dodd enters the Holy

of Holies and brings to our understanding how prayer reacted upon the Lord Himself. These hours when Jesus prayed, whether in the lonely mountain or in Gethsemane, touch the most intimate scenes of His earthly life. No other book touches this phase of the prayer life of Jesus.

It was with thrilling delight that hundreds heard Dr. Dodd lecture on these themes. His coming to the Baptist Bible Institute to lecture on this subject was keenly anticipated. His gracious and spiritual words met every expectation and not only satisfied his numerous hearers but likewise marked a distinct high place in the most exalted month the Baptist Bible Institute has ever known.

This book is sent forth in its mission of love with the expressed hope that it will quicken others and lead to more devout communion with the Father as the Spoken Message did for those of us who were fortunate enough to hear these lectures.

JOHN T. CHRISTIAN.

Baptist Bible Institute,
New Orleans, La.

FOREWORD

This series of studies is the substance of addresses which have been given to various Young People's assemblies, Bible Conferences, and General Assemblies throughout the country.

It is not intended to cover all the subject of prayer; not even all the phases of prayer that Jesus Himself touched. Neither the Model Prayer which He gave His disciples in the sixth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, and which has been the subject of many volumes, nor anything else that He said about prayer, is touched.

It has been my purpose to discover what Jesus did, what He said, and what happened in His own personal private and public prayers.

It appears to me that the greatest need of the Kingdom of God and of the world to-day is more intercessors, more of God's remembrances who give Him no rest day or night. But the need is just as great that those who pray shall know how to pray. There is too much prayerless praying.

If this little look into the prayer life of our Lord shall help anywhere in increasing the number of those who pray, and increasing the power of those who have been praying by virtue of their

following the example of Jesus, then I shall be abundantly repaid for this humble effort.

I am indebted to many friends who have encouraged me in this work, and to the many intercessors who constantly buttress me about with their prayers.

I am especially indebted to Rev. Finley W. Tinnin for helpful suggestions and corrections of the manuscript.

M. E. Dodd.

Pastor's Study
First Baptist Church,
Shreveport, La.

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THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS

THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS

"Behold He Prayeth"

No man ever accomplished so many tasks in so brief a span of time as did Jesus. And yet no man ever spent more time in prayer than did He. Perhaps it would be better to say it this way: No man ever accomplished more than did Jesus *because* no man ever devoted as much time to prayer. Luther was wont to say that "Prayer and provender hinder no man on his journey." The more a worker for God prays the sharper will be his tools.

Only a casual reading of the Gospels will impress one that a great part of Jesus' life must have been given to prayer and meditation. Prayer to Him was no mere formality nor perfunctory performance. It was a most vital and real experience. The repetition over and over of meaningless phrases by the hypocritical Pharisees on the street corners was to Him an object of contempt. It was not real prayer.

Prayer, to Jesus, meant fellowship with the Great Father. Prayer was the means of "getting things from God." Prayer was the refuge from life's storms. Prayer planned the Kingdom movements, selected the apostles, established the

church. Prayer warded off the fiery darts of the enemy until the fulness of time for their final fury to burst on Him, and then prayer prepared the Lord for the worst. Prayer was His safety valve which released the pent-up passions and gave vent to the smouldering fires within.

Jesus began His public ministry with a prayer at the holy ordinance of His baptism (Luke 3:12) and closed it with a petition in the midst of the agonies of the cross. And all in between He was constantly borne upward and onward upon the wings of prayer. Prayer consumed much of His time and energy.

Jesus met every onslaught of the enemy with prayer. Prayer sustained Him from the desert wilderness, where the battle raged fierce and furious for forty mortal days, until in hunger and loneliness and weariness of body, it seemed He must yield. It was by prayer that He was supported clear through to the final attack in Gethsemane, when, bowed and bent and almost broken with the weight of the world's sins, He cried: "Let this cup pass." He ever found one unfailing resource in prayer, and through its power met and engaged and conquered the arch fiend of all darkness, devilishness and doubt.

Prayer to Jesus was both an act and an atmosphere. In it He lived, moved and had His being. He met every emergency, faced every difficulty, conquered every foe by the power of prayer. Oftentimes "He retired into aloneness with God,

and spread out His Spirit before the Father, as Gideon spread out his fleece on the plain of Jezreel to be filled with the heavenly dew."

There is no greater need among us to-day than that we shall enter for a season into the school of prayer with our Lord. The most casual and superficial observer of our times cannot fail to be impressed with the prevailing prayerlessness of this modern age. There is even prayerlessness in our prayers. It is noticeable among deacons, ministers and members. Too many of God's people are committing the sin from which Samuel craved deliverance, of failing to pray for one another and for the world (I Samuel 12:23). In the midst of the earth's most tragic and trying times the thing at which God marvels is "that there is no intercessor" (Isaiah 59:16).

Church people work and toil and strain and strive until nerve force is almost exhausted, and in desperation wonder why more is not accomplished. God explains it, "Ye lust and have not; ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not because ye ask not" (James 4:2).

Dr. John R. Mott reminds us that "an alarming weakness among Christians is that we are producing Christian activities faster than we are producing Christian experience and faith; that the discipline of our souls and the deepening of our acquaintance with God are not proving sufficiently thorough to enable us to meet the unprecedented

expanse of opportunity and the responsibility of our expansion."

Ours is a machinery age and we are attempting to make up in the Kingdom of God for the lack of spiritual power by mechanical force. It is easier to organise than to agonise and we extol "pep" above power.

There is no force within the reach of man so vitally necessary to meet the impending dangers of the day as that of believing prayer. And there is no one who can teach us to pray as does our Lord. We shall, therefore, walk with Him through the Gospels from His baptism to Calvary, observing His ways and words, His conduct and character, His place and posture, His meaning and accomplishment while at prayer.

The source of our information for this study is, of course, the four Gospels; or rather the Gospel as revealed by the four writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The composite picture of the four gives us the perfect Christ, and we are to look for the perfect Christ at His highest exercise as seen in the act of prayer. "Praying is the very highest energy of which the human soul is capable."

The masterpieces of art are reproduced in all their beautifully blending colours by a process of photography and printing which gives to us in prints a magnificent and perfect reproduction of the original.

The photographic instrument is so arranged

with certain coloured glass and lenses that when placed before the painting it allows only certain rays of light to penetrate, for example, the purple. From that film a photograph is made, then a half-tone cut, and from this the first impression of the painting is produced. Once more the camera is changed by transfer of the coloured glass so that other certain rays of light are permitted to penetrate, for example, the blue. From this the cut is made and thus the second impression is printed over the previous piece. This process continues through just as many times as there are different colours to be reproduced. When the last impression is made we have a perfect reproduction of the painting.

This is the process followed by the writers of the Gospel in their work of reproducing the Masterpiece of all time, the Lord Jesus Christ. Matthew turned his camera upon that matchless Man and drew forth the royal rays of His Kingship and stamped that in his part of the Gospel. Mark came with his camera and drew out the blue rays of loyal service as Jehovah's servant and stamped that on the print. Luke drew forth the pure life of a perfect Manhood and made this impression with his Gospel. John's instrument penetrated the Eternities and photographed the Christ who was and is and is to be, the Pre-existent, Eternal Son of God, and stamped that upon the print.

And these four give us the perfect picture of the perfect Man and of the perfect God.

We shall follow His footsteps through the Gospels with the writers as guides, not to hear what He said about prayer, nor what He taught by word of mouth concerning prayer; but to see what He taught by example and to observe what He himself said and did while at prayer. May the Holy Spirit open our eyes to understand what it all means and give us a like mind and heart with Him.

"Lord, teach us to pray."

SECTION I: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

THE PLACE, POSTURE, APPROACH AND LENGTH OF HIS PRAYERS

Scales.

1. On River Jordon at Baptism Luke 3:21-22 -

2. In a mountain

matt. 14:23. } while Disciples
Mark 6:46 } were in boat on
" 1:35 - sea in storm
Luke 6:12 - Solitary place.
when he chose disciples.

Luke 9:18 - after feeding 5000 & before question
" 9:28-29. - mount of Transfiguration
Luke 21:36-38 - as he taught great

3. In the upper room.

John 17:1-26.

4 At the grave. John 11:41-42.

5 In Gethsemane.

Matt. 26:36-42

mark 14:32-39

Luke 22:41-45 - "as he was wont"
John 18:1-2 - "often resorted thither to pray"

6. On the Cross.

matt. 27:46 my God + etc.

Luke 23:34 - Father, forgive them
" " :46 - "Father into thy hands
I commend my Spirit.

Died praying

Mrs. Swett. & Grace Arbor.
Seminary Close.
Collins & R. R. Walk.

SECTION I: PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

I

HIS PLACE OF PRAYER

Jesus had preferred places of prayer. It is said of Him "that He went into a certain mountain to pray"; "He went into the wilderness to pray." It was His habit to go into the garden for the purpose of prayer. Matt. 14:

So fixed was this habit that it became known to all of His disciples. When Judas would betray Jesus into the hands of the enemy he knew exactly where to find Him, because "He often resorted thither to pray."

These places were sacred, not because of some special service, or consecration, or dedication; nor because of some priestly incantations over them, but because of some personal experience had at them.

Peniel was a sacred place because Jacob there saw God face to face. Abraham's desert tent became precious in his memories because of the heavenly visitor that came to him there. Moses recognised the ground as holy at the burning bush because it was there that he heard the still, small

voice of God. The Isle of Patmos was a dedicated temple of worship to John because he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day at that holy place. The Mamertine prison will forever be a sacred spot because in that the passionate Paul received from God his marvelous revelations of Divine truth.

Thus did Jesus find the Mount of Olives a place particularly sacred and lending itself in a gracious way to the spirit of prayer.

It was on this place that God was wont to be worshipped in ages gone by (II Samuel 15:32). It was here that God appeared to Ezekiel (Ezekiel 11:23). From the brow of this hill branches were gathered for booths at the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 8:15).

And some of the most sacred experiences of our Lord Himself clustered around this place. Descending its sunny slopes He made His triumphal entry into the city. From its crest He wept over the fate of Jerusalem. When the stormy end was approaching, from this hill He prophesied the city's destruction. It was this place that furnished Him quietness and rest following the last Passover and the establishment of the Lord's Supper. From this hill He was also to pass out from among the disciples, step into the chariot of God and ascend to Glory on High. When He comes to this earth again His blessed feet will touch it first on Olivet (Zechariah 14:2). What historic interest, what holy memories, what

glorious anticipations are associated with this place.

No wonder that He oft resorted thither to pray. No wonder prayer was easy and sweet and powerful in this place. What a lesson for us poor mortals, teaching us that if prayer is to be real and vital and intimate there must be certain spots to which we can hide ourselves away from the storms of life's temptations and trials for a season with the Good Father.

To us it may be some quiet spot on the old farm; some little country church house; some invalid chair; some attic corner in our own home; some closet in our place of business; some secluded corner in the church house, some particular pew; some place—any place where "God comes down our souls to greet, and glory crowns the mercy seat."

A great business man, a friend of mine in New York City, invited me to pay him a visit. I had been a happy guest in his lovely Christian home in the South many times. I had some misgivings about his going to the great city and looked forward to this first visit with him there with keen anticipation, and yet with some anxiety as to what I should find concerning his progress or backslidings in his Christian life.

When I had run the gamut of office boys and secretaries and found him in his private office I found the same plain fine Christian business

man that I had known in the South. Just before going out to lunch he said, "I want you to see this little room just back of my private office." He never shows it except to most intimate friends. In that little room was a table with an open Bible and one window. The great business man said quietly to me:

"This is where I always consult the Senior Partner of our business about all of its greatest problems. When I started in the business world twenty-five years ago as an office boy at a salary of three dollars a week I took the Lord Jesus as my partner for life. From then until now with this colossal business on my hands and the great salary I am drawing Christ has been consciously real and practically helpful in a thousand ways. When in distress I come into this place and never fail to find help. For example: We had engaged a vessel for some export service, but the Government having gotten into the Great War requisitioned this vessel. What was I to do? I came in here to ask Him who knoweth all about all things. I said to Him: 'Now, Lord, this is your business and my business; if I prosper your cause will get the benefit of the prosperity; if I lose, your cause loses also; you know whether it is best for me to have a vessel for this export and you know where I can get one; show me now the way.' In less than one hour I had a proposition on my desk for another vessel at several thousand dollars less than the former one would

have cost me. These thousands of dollars saving I figured belonged to the Lord. I had my own legitimate profit from the business itself."

It works!

My friend expressed doubt as to what we preachers might say about an experience of that kind, but declared that to him, a plain business man, it was a very profound reality. Why not?

Furthermore, if one is a partner with Christ why should not this be the ordinary experience of life rather than the unusual? Is not the failure due to the fact that we do not consider it an obligation to share with Christ the successes which He assists us in achieving?

A beloved physician whom I know, and a faithful deacon, was showing me through his private sanitarium.

"This is the guest room; here are the offices; this is the dining-room; yonder is the X-ray room; here is the operating room, and these are the patients' rooms.

"But chief of all," said he, "here is the best room in the building, my prayer room," and he ushered me in. It was in the roof of the building, with no light except that which came in through a small skylight.

"It is well, deacon," said I, "that all of your light comes from above."

"Indeed it does," he replied, "because I never perform an operation without coming to this room and asking the Great Physician in His Supreme

wisdom and strength to clear my mind that I may think properly; to steady my nerves that I may operate cleanly; and to guide my hand that I may make no mistake."

It is no wonder to me that in his town this "beloved physician" has as much practice as any other half dozen physicians and does more than half of the entire surgical work of the city. Such a physician has tremendous advantages over all others. He is the only kind who shall ever prescribe for or operate upon me or mine.

To me personally there are certain places where, when praying, heaven comes a bit nearer and the Lord seems a bit dearer.

One of these is a country roadside in Tennessee, along which I trudged a barefoot thirteen-year-old boy for many weary nights to the little country church house during the revival meetings in search of salvation.

Twenty-five years afterward when I had gone through school and college and had become pastor of a great city church I was invited back there to hold a meeting in the same little country church. At the close of the first service the pastor said: "We are going to Brother Butler's for dinner—have you any preference as to the road we shall take?" I expressed the desire to go along a certain way, and arriving at a certain spot I asked him to stop while I should find as nearly as possible the place of that great experience of a quarter of a century ago when such a great

change had been wrought in my heart. Finding the very tree by the side of which on that wonderful night I had knelt in prayer, I knelt down once again. A flood of memories swept through my soul. I remembered the burden I had felt for sin, the terrible consciousness of guilt before God. I remembered how in desperation I had sought peace a thousand ways to find; and how at last on that wonderful night I had stopped on this roadside to commit myself to Christ. There I had lifted up my despairing cry for mercy; and there had seen the tendernesss and compassion of that sweetest of all faces; and there had heard the sweetest words that ever fell on mortal ears, the words—"Thy sins be forgiven thee." There I had found the peace of God that passeth all understanding, that peace which the world can never give nor take away. It was a holy place; it was a sacred place. And now, twenty-five years afterward, it was a Bethel to my heart. Prayer seemed more real. God seemed nearer because of this sacred place, my shrine of prayer.

When I started overseas with our soldiers I passed again through Tennessee and Kentucky to say "good-bye" to my friends. I visited the town of my first pastorate after leaving college. After a public service and a few personal calls on some real old friends I asked that I might go to the little village cemetery. I did not know how a journey over the seas in the midst of war's desolation and destruction would end. I needed more

of the assurance of Divine power and help. I did not know where I could find it so quickly as on one sacred little spot of earth out in that cemetery. So I went there. Some kind friends had anticipated the visit and had carried fragrant flowers to the little grave. Arriving there the other friends, with keen spiritual perception, knowing that I desired to be left alone, passed on. There alone in the quiet place "I met the Master face to face."

Kneeling beside the little grave under the sobbing cedars, memories of that Christmas time, a dozen years before, returned. There with the falling snows we had put the little one in the cold earth. There came also memories of God's glorious hand and marvelous grace which in infinite love came upon me that sad time. And prayer at this sacred place was made more real. Call it mere sentiment if you will; sentiment is the thing that brings God close to us. Man by the road of reason alone cannot find God.

II

HIS POSTURE IN PRAYER

Mark 11:25. "When ye stand praying

"And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down and prayed."—*Luke* 22:41.

"And He went a little farther and fell on His face and prayed."—*Matthew* 26:39.

"And Jesus lifted up His eyes and prayed."—*John* 11:41.

Jesus never prayed while sitting. He always *stood*, as at the grave of Lazarus, or *kneeled down*, or *fell on his face*. Prayer is too sacred and holy and divine to be so lightly dealt with as to sit in one's seat while talking to the King.

The posture one assumes in prayer may appear unimportant to some. "It is not so much the physical attitude as the spiritual condition which counts," we are told. And to confirm this the Scripture is quoted, "Man looketh on the outward part but God looketh on the heart."

This really is tragically true in regard to prayer. For what man sees of irreverence and disrespect in one's physical posture in prayer God sees in the heart as their cause. It is the old law of cause and effect at work. The flippant, irreverent heart produces a thoughtless disre-

spect for Deity. And nowhere does it more accurately express itself than in prayer.

Whether one has been so taught or not, there should be sufficient native instinct to bring him to his feet or knees when God is approaching or being approached. When a British soldier hears the call—"Soldiers, the King!" he suddenly rises to attention. When the President of the United States appears in public the audience, both by instinct and by training, rises to its feet.

Oh, how much more reverence and respect does the King of Kings and Lord of Lords deserve than these earthly rulers! And why do not men bow down before Him, *kneel* in His holy presence, or at least stand in dignified respect?

When Jesus stood or kneeled down or fell on His face in prayer, He was obeying the deepest impulse of His own pure heart and at the same time following the best examples of all the past.

The wisest man of all Christ's ancestors came to God for the solemn dedication of the great temple and "*stood* before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven." This was not only the practice of the past and the method of Jesus but He also taught it. "And when ye *stand* praying."

There are two little things connected with these examples of standing in prayer that may be quite insignificant within themselves, but to which at-

tention is here directed for whatever they may mean to any one.

In Solomon's prayer as he stood he "spread forth his hands." With arms outstretched and palms upturned as if open and ready to receive whatever blessing the good God would pour into them, he stood in devout reverence and poured forth one of the most passionate prayers of all the Bible (I Kings 8:22-53). It is one of the mysteries of permissive Providence and one of the enigmas of human history that the "spread forth" hands and upturned palms, which in the glorious past of Israel was expressive of the deepest humility, devoutest reverence and most worshipful spirit, should now be the expression of ridicule and the butt and jest of a great people. But such seems to be the "wonders of prophecy" and the exigencies of time. It is the ebb and flow of the tides of time for men and races.

The other item to which attention is drawn is that when Jesus stood to pray He "lifted up His eyes." This was done at the grave of Lazarus, at the feeding of the five thousand, and on other occasions. "He lifted up His eyes." Whether He ever closed His eyes while at prayer or not, we do not know, for it is not said.

We close our eyes in prayer in order to shut out all sight of material things and to shut ourselves in to the vision of God by faith. This is very good and is not to be criticised, but our

Lord's example does not require it. We might with as much reason stop our ears while praying in order to shut out all earthly sounds and to shut ourselves in to the voice of God.

But kneeling is the most natural posture in prayer. Not only did Solomon stand in prayer, but upon the brazen scaffold which he had built for the purpose "he kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel" (II Chronicles 6:13).

The Psalms in which we find more of real prayer and the spirit of prayer than anywhere else in the Bible, exclaim, "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!"

A child kneeling beside the bed at his evening prayer must be a joy to God and angels. A whole household kneeling in family prayer is a crown of glory to national life. A congregation of devout worshippers upon their knees in prayer is earth's most glorious gathering. A convention of Christian people planning for the performance of Christ's Kingdom work, if upon its knees, need not fear devils nor demons, for "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees."

Though in no sense a formalist or a literalist or a ceremonialist, I cannot find it in my heart to object to those churches which provide kneeling benches in the pews for those who wish to kneel down in prayer.

But the posture which expresses the deepest

devotion and the most heart-rending anxiety is for one to prostrate himself upon his face in the very dust.

The congregation of Israel had sinned grievously "And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron saying, Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And they *fell upon their faces,* and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?" (Numbers 16:20-22).

When Joshua met the unseen captain who had in his hand a drawn sword, he fell on his face to the earth and worshipped and said unto him, "What saith my lord unto his servant?" (Joshua 5:14).

"And David *lifted up his eyes* and saw the angel of the Lord" (I Chronicles 21:16).

If one's consciousness of sin be deep enough and his vision of God's holiness be clear enough, and his realisation of the need of Divine help be strong enough, he will then fall upon his face with broken heart and contrite spirit and pray.

Only once have I seen one thus prostrated in prayer. It was a heart-broken mother, who in torturous agony of soul over a wayward son fell upon her face and cried out, "If Thou save him not then blot my name out of the Book of remembrance."

Only once did Jesus fall upon his face. It was in Gethsemane when he had gone "a little

farther." It is this "little farther" that counts in character and conquest. When he had gone "a little farther" and fell upon His face the bloody sweat sanctified the earth and a shriek, more terrible than earth had ever heard, rent the midnight air and reached unto heaven.

Oh, what praying was that! How cold and formal and flippant and irreverent is the most of our praying in comparison!

"Lord, Teach Us to Pray."

III

HIS APPROACH IN PRAYER

Each prayer of the Lord's always began with the word "Father." There may have been qualifying words, such as "O Father"; "Holy Father"; "Our Father"; but the word "Father" was never absent from the prayers of Jesus. There is great significance in this fact.

We hear some prayers begin with such expressions as "Almighty God," "Eternal God," etc. The difference between this and the method of Jesus is the difference between law and grace. They are as far apart in meaning as night and day. Under law we are servants; under grace we are children. Jesus, having become the end of the law for righteousness to all that believe, would teach us that our approach in prayer, from the moment of that experience of having accepted Him as personal Saviour, is the same as His.

Furthermore, to begin our prayer with "Almighty God" sets Him too far off and too high up for us to reach Him. It may be all right for the guilty sinner to smite his breast and cry, "God be merciful to me." But God's child should say "Father," and *may* say "Father."

Indeed this is the only approach which the

sinner has, for God will not hear a sinner's prayer (John 9:31). The only acceptable prayer an unregenerated sinner can offer is a prayer for mercy and forgiveness and salvation.

There is one exception to be made to the statement above, "that Jesus always began His prayers with the word 'Father.'" This is the prayer uttered on the cross recorded in Mark 15:34: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" But this exception confirms rather than confutes the above proposition, because this prayer of Jesus was the sinner's prayer.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21). Christ became sin, but not a sinner. Sin was *on* Him, but not *in* Him. He took the sinner's place, and having taken the sinner's place He must pray the sinner's prayer. Therefore He could not say: "Father," but must say "My God."

Unregenerated sinners are the children of the devil (John 8:44). If God were their Father they would love Jesus (John 8:42). Then they could pray as Jesus prayed. But being the children of wrath by nature (Ephesians 2:3) and condemned under the law they must pray as Jesus prayed on the cross, "My God."

But we who are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26), having been redeemed from the curse of the law because He was made a curse for us (Galatians 3:13) have the

privilege and the right of approaching God as He did, viz., on the basis of childhood. We, too, can say "Father," "Holy Father," "Our Father."

Jesus not only taught this by His example, but He gave the explicit word to His disciples—but to the disciples only—"When ye pray say 'Our Father.' " That is to say, "your Father and my Father," the Father of our regenerated spirits. This can be appropriately said only by those who have been born from above, born again. We say "Our Father," which means "My Father," because I have been born again, and "the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ," His only Begotten Son.

This approach makes prayer powerful. It fulfils the sublime condition of all prevailing prayer, that it may be in the name of the Lord Jesus. To pray in the name of the Lord Jesus means more than simply saying, "for Jesus' sake" at the close of the prayer. It means that through His merit, by the right which He has purchased because of His atonement wrought out in my behalf, by virtue of the shed blood and my own cleansed soul, thereby, I can come saying "Our Father."

The privilege of thus approaching God in prayer also makes prayer very intimate, very sweet and very simple. If He is my Father through Christ, and He is, then I can come into His presence unafraid and speak to Him with the

assurance that He will hear with a sympathetic ear. I can surely come to my Father joyfully, happily, and as a little child, climb upon His knee and whisper into His ear the deepest secret of my soul, with the assurance that He understands.

Mr. David Lloyd George was sitting in a council at 10 Downing Street one morning conferring with representatives of other great nations over tremendously important affairs of State. Into the midst of this council bounded his cherub-faced little girl, unceremoniously, joyfully, and unafraid, and ran at once to the knees of her father. Like the great man he is, he looked down at her sympathetically and leaned over to hear what she had to say. She whispered something into his ear, probably of some broken doll or of some childish desire, and he patted her on the head, smiling his sympathy of approval, and with satisfaction she bounded out again.

How beautifully this illustrates what in a finer and higher and holier way is that relationship between us and our Heavenly Father. God, our Father, has the care of worlds on His heart and the responsibility of upholding the universe in His hands. But with all that, His ear is always open to the cry of the child and we never fail to find that understanding heart and sympathetic smile when He is thus approached.

I have seen large groups of children playing on the lawn while the mothers sat to themselves

talking, and suddenly some mother would leap from her seat and start when no one else present was conscious of anything unusual. But in the midst of all the noise and din of children's play her keen mother ear had caught the sound of a distressing cry from her own child's voice.

God's ear must be marvelously keen to hear in the midst of the world's clamour and clanking the voice of His child, but He has never yet failed to hear and to respond. His arm is not shortened that He cannot save, neither is His ear heavy that He cannot hear (Isaiah 59:1).

In Mark 14:36 it is recorded that in the Gethsemane prayer Jesus said "Abba, Father." This is the only Gospel which uses that word "Abba." I am grateful that Mark put it in. The word "Abba" belongs to the child language of the Saviour. It is the babe's prattle. It goes back to childhood's golden hours when He once nestled in the Father's strong arms and looked up into His face and stroked His cheek and said "dear Papa." Oh, how blessedly tender and sweet and glorious this makes prayer. Prayer is fellowship with the Father.

One who has a strong, noble Christian father in the flesh can appreciate this illustration. God pity those whom the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God through faith in Jesus Christ has no helpful meaning, because of the wicked waywardness of an earthly father. Blessed be those children

who can find in their earthly relationship a stepping-stone to the Heavenly relationship with the Heavenly Father.

If men everywhere are to pray as Jesus prayed then the unsaved people must say "My God, why hast thou forsaken me," while the redeemed may tenderly call, "O my Father."

"Lord, Teach Us to Pray."

IV

THE LENGTH OF HIS PRAYERS

The private prayers of Jesus were very long. His public prayers were very short.

In private He spent hours upon hours in prayer. It is said many times that He spent a whole night in prayer alone. In the desert temptation He no doubt had many such nights with the Father. When the time arrived to choose twelve apostles He must needs spend an entire night in prayer. When the multitude would have forced an earthly crown on His unwilling head He retired into a loneliness with God and prayed. His private praying was marked by the length of the prayers, but His public prayers were very brief.

Any one of the recorded public prayers of Jesus can be repeated in from three to five seconds. This excepts the seventeenth chapter of John, and it is doubtful whether that prayer should be considered as public or private. Certainly there were very few earthly ears, if any at all, which heard it. And the prayer which He told His disciples to say, as found in the sixth chapter of Matthew, can be repeated in twenty seconds.

I wonder if there is any special significance in these facts: Is it true that in proportion as one

prays long in private he prays short in public? Or conversely, in proportion as he prays a short prayer in private he prays a long one in public? If this is true, then it is evident that some beloved brethren who are honoured by being called upon for prayer at public functions are very far behind in their praying, even weeks, possibly months, and they seize this opportunity to catch up.

Jesus' public prayers, which were so short, are characterised by having just one definite thing at a time for which to pray. He did not ramble over the universe, but mentioned that one thing and was done.

But His private prayers, which no doubt were more in the nature of fellowship than that of mere petition, consumed many hours. Something great always happened, however, immediately following one of these long private prayers. The "twelve" are chosen and sent out; the "seventy" were sent out two by two; the church was organised, or some other great kingdom movement started. Such is the power of prevailing private prayers.

Not all of God's children have yet learned what the fulness of that glory in prayer is which enables them to spend hour after hour upon their knees in holy communion with the Father.

During an evangelistic meeting, being conducted in our church by Dr. L. R. Scarborough, things were going hard. At the close of an evening service I asked those who would agree to

do so to remain for a season of prayer. There was no thought in my mind that it would go on through the night. To *announce* beforehand that there is to be an all-night prayer meeting simply for the sake of saying that we have had an all-night prayer meeting would destroy the real value of such a thing. At this service, however, we simply thought of remaining for a few moments, but we were borne on by rising tides of the Spirit's presence up to 12 o'clock, then 1, then 2, and thirty-eight were present at sunrise the next morning. Some went home at 12 o'clock, but, finding that they could not rest, got out of bed and came back to the service.

There was no set programme for the service. Scriptures were read; songs were sung; testimonies given; prayers led by individuals here and there—just as the Spirit put it in their hearts. A beautiful child, who had remained for the service with her grandmother, was converted. A young man, whose voice had never before been heard in public in behalf of the Saviour's cause, gave a testimony and definitely committed his life to Christian work. He has been an outstanding leader among the young people of his church and of the state ever since. He is one of those fine young business men that mean so much to the cause of Christ. He has since been made a deacon in his church. Another young business man who was present has found his Christian life made over since that experience. His wife and children

have become members of the church and he himself has been made a deacon.

Many other personal experiences might be related. Following this all night of prayer and praise more than twenty members were added to the church the next day, with millions of dollars of consecrated wealth, and the meetings swept on like a prairie fire to a mighty climax on the Sunday night following.

Since then whenever some great task is upon us this same group is called together for prayer. Following one of these prayer services the church on a given Lord's Day raised over $300,000.00 for the denominational missionary and benevolent causes of Christ. On another occasion there was born, in a similar prayer service, a great building enterprise, which has resulted in one of America's greatest and handsomest church houses.

Oh, the power that God has wrapped up in believing prayers! It is inexhaustible. Private praying, if earnest and believing and zealous, will get great things from God.

A Sunday school teacher had been going along at a "poor dying" rate, spiritually, though industrious with methods and zealous in the preparation of his lessons. Realising the need of something more, he decided, one Saturday night, that he would pray it out, and the Sunday school hour on the Sunday morning found him still on his knees. He said a few words to the class, and then, to the surprise of everybody, one after another

began to get up to confess his negligence of Christian duty and to pledge his life anew to Christ or to confess his own sins and accept Christ as Saviour. From that moment the class moved on until it became the greatest spiritual force in the city and the community. The teacher found that the lessons were more easily prepared; that simple methods accomplished more than ever before, and that his own life had been enriched a thousandfold.

There is a pastor who goes, occasionally, on Saturday nights to his own church house, after the lights are out and everybody else is gone, and enters his pulpit for prayer. He testifies that upon every such experience the presence of God on the following Lord's Day service is more consciously realised and more visibly demonstrated than at any other time.

Much private praying after the example of our Lord will weave into the woof and fibre of one's spiritual being a keener sensitiveness to spiritual things and a deeper realisation of spiritual powers than all things else besides. One can do nothing in God's work until he has prayed, but he "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth" —after he has prayed.

Let private praying be long and the public prayers short, if we would follow the Lord's example.

SECTION II: THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS AS KING

SEEN IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW—
11: 25, 14: 19, 19: 13, 26, 39

SECTION II: THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS AS KING

I

HIS PRAYER OF PRAISE

Matthew 11:25-26

"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

This prayer follows a melancholy lament over apparent failure. It was on, what the average preacher would call, a blue Monday. Jesus had made an earnest effort in Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, but all of them had rejected His message. Even John the Baptist had begun to doubt and had sent messengers to ask, "Art thou He that should come or do we look for another?"

Under such circumstances one might expect from any man a dirge of despair. But not so with our Saviour. He burst forth in a prayer of praise. His exuberant spirit could not be suppressed. His good cheer and perpetual praise were not dependent upon outward conditions and circum-

stances. They rested firmly upon an inward state. His relationship to God bore Him up. Because He was God's and lived in the eternities and the circumstances of a passing day could not defeat Him, therefore He could exemplify the truth of the little verse:

> "'Tis easy enough to be cheerful
> When life flows by like a song,
> But the man worth while
> Is the man who can smile
> When everything goes dead wrong."

"I thank thee" are the first words of Jesus' first recorded prayer. "Exomologoumai" is the compound Greek word which He here uses. The word is used eleven times in the New Testament. It means, to thank, to praise, to promise, to confess obligations and acknowledge gratitude. It is the same as the expression used in Luke 10:21, where it is said that Jesus "exulted in Spirit." Jesus was saying in this prayer, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I thank Thee, I praise Thee, I adore Thee, I concur in the Divine will." "The thing expressed is adoring acquiescence, complete satisfaction with that law of the Divine procedure about to be mentioned." It is the "giving visible expression to unusual emotion." It was a burst of enthusiastic praise; it was a shout.

We need to restore this lost art of praise in our present-day praying, preaching and worshipping. We storm against sin and plead for right-

eousness and exhort to service, but all too seldom sing psalms of praise and prayers of thanksgiving. We sing ditties and waltzes and ragtime and shun a hallelujah chorus. Prayers of petition and pledging and promising are prominent, but of praise there is all too little.

Jesus has here set the fine example of how to "Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Having failed of this we have therefore missed the fulfilment of the promise, "And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

The words "thank" and "think" are very closely related. We probably do not thank much because we do not think deeply upon the blessings of God.

There are two things in this Scripture in Matthew which brought forth this pæan of praise from the heart of Jesus. He was praising the Father for *concealing* and for *revealing*. "I thank Thee, O Father, because thou hast hid . . . and hast revealed."

Spiritual truth is concealed by a wise providence from speculative philosophers and sharp-witted men. It is not wise to "cast pearls before swine" lest they turn and rend you. Man cannot find God purely by intellectual efforts. Reason is no revealer of Divine things. Cold philosophy cannot sound the depths of Deity. A

worldly wise man cannot know Him "whom to know aright is life eternal."

Spiritual truth must be spiritually discerned. A man blind in his own self-conceit cannot see eternal things. God has hid spiritual things from all such and for this we should join Jesus in giving devout thanks.

But His thanksgiving is more exuberant over the fact that the Father has revealed them unto babes. The childlike mind of unassuming docility can easily be taught spiritual truth. Those who have no preconceived notions of their own, but who are willing to hear what God the Lord doth speak shall learn of Him. Many a country deacon has fathomed divine revelation of which some university professors have no conception. Many a John Jasper has learned things from God that the Ingersolls could never find out.

A Kentucky friend of mine will never say "Good-bye" when we are separating. His parting words always are: "Don't forget to praise the Lord." Surely Jesus has set us a fine example that we should always praise the Lord, even in the midst of our greatest disappointments.

II

GRACE AT MEALS

Matthew 14:19

"And He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven He blessed and brake and gave the loaves to His disciples."—*Luke* 9:16.

"Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberius nigh unto the place where they did eat bread after that the Lord had given thanks."—*John* 6:23.

Jesus could no more think of eating without giving thanks to the Giver of all good than He could think of blasphemy.

A man who had never been accustomed to having thanks at his dining table said that he was cured of such base ingratitude by observing the conduct of some hogs in his orchard. He was shaking down the fruit from the trees and observed that the hogs ate ravenously of it without even so much as lifting up their eyes to the source whence came their blessing. It came upon this man with the force of a terrible conviction, "I am no better in my manner than these dumb brutes." But he solemnly resolved to be better and to do better and ever afterwards had a blessing at his table.

Wesley has given us this beautiful verse, which is an appropriate grace:

> "Be present at our table, Lord,
> Be here and everywhere adored,
> These mercies bless
> And grant that we may feast with
> Thee in paradise."

But there are so many things which militate against the beautiful old custom of grace before meals that it requires a great deal of grace, consecration, conviction and character to overcome them.

For one thing, family discipline is so slack twisted that in many homes there are no regular hours for the family meal. Each member of the family straggles in according to his own inclination and has his bite to himself, while many others have their meals sent to their rooms. Such family discipline is a deadly danger to morals, religion and character. It is a menace to civil and divine government. Bolshevism and anarchy start in the home.

For another thing, everybody is in such a hurry these days that there is no time to stop and say "I thank you" even to God. "Anyhow, why should we take the time,—God knows our hearts and knows whether or not we are grateful and there is no need to be always telling Him about it." Such is the shallow reasoning of many a hard heart and many a hurried life.

For the most part, failure to give thanks is simply the outcome of a thoughtless, if not a base, ingratitude, and that's all there is to it.

In many cases neglect of grace at meals may be due to an ignorance of just what to say or how to say it, but anybody who cares to can memorise and repeat some such verses as these:

"Father, we thank Thee for these blessings and pray Thee to consecrate them to our good."

"Father, we thank Thee for this food for our bodies and pray that Thou wilt feed our souls upon the bread of life."

"Lord, we thank Thee for these friends, for this food and for our fellowship."

"We thank Thee, Father, for these and all Thy comforts."

"We gratefully acknowledge Thee as the Giver of every good gift."

"We thank Thee for our food and pray Thee to help us to use the strength we gain from it for Thy glory and honour."

I have wondered many times if there is not a vital relationship between our failure to give thanks to God for our food and to ask that He bless it to the nourishment of our bodies, and what we call "our dinner disagreed with us." It might help digestion and general health more than we think to be more genuinely grateful and cheerfully thankful always for all blessings.

III

BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN

"Then were brought unto Him little children that He should put His hand on them and pray."—*Matthew* 19:13.

It must have been a very tender and very beautiful prayer, this prayer of the Lord for the little children. Oh, how it must have warmed the hearts of the fond fathers and mothers. I wonder what He said in His prayer. The records do not tell us what the words of this prayer were.

It may be that the records are silent here because the disciples had acted so rudely toward these children and their parents. "The disciples rebuked them." Poor deluded disciples! They may have thought they were doing their Lord a kindness. He had great and mighty matters upon His mind and heart. They probably thought He should not be disturbed with such trifles as a foolish father asking a blessing upon a mere child. Therefore, as His protectors, they would shunt off these mothers and their children.

But they did not know Jesus. His heart was made of different stuff. He loved little children. He saw the possibilities and potentialities wrapped up in them. He knew the children of

to-day would be the world leaders of to-morrow. And no matter how many grown-ups were clamouring for Him at this time, He would leave them long enough to put His hand on these little children and pray.

Herein is disclosed the tenderness of the Saviour: Children found nothing in Him from which to shrink. Grown men and women are justified in fearing that man of whom little children are afraid. And the man who has nothing in his own heart which can be drawn out, sympathetically, by a child is a man to be shunned. Show me a man who does not love children and flowers and music and I will show you one to be dreaded. Jesus was not that kind. With open arms He would receive every child who would come. "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."

A little Moslem child accounted for her preference for the Christian religion over Mohammedanism by saying: "I like your Jesus because He loved little girls. Our Mohammed did not love little girls." With unerring instinct she had seized upon at least one of the two great and fundamental differences between the two religions. Among all founders and teachers of the various religions of the world of all time, it was Jesus alone who thought of and cared for the children, and who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." The oft-repeated sneer that "Christianity is a religion for women and

children'' is, when rightly understood, a gem in its crown of glory.

What will those wicked people who do not love children and do not want children do when they get to heaven, if perchance, by the mercy and grace of God, they ever get there? There will be myriads of children in heaven. But these hard-hearted souls will have a new nature in heaven, as well as a new name, and of course that will change their attitude toward everything, including children.

What a rebuke is this prayer of Jesus for those most despicable of all persons who exploit children for their own personal gain. Jesus here announces His programme of protection for childhood. He would fling Himself with all the power of His prayers between every helpless child and the piggish profiteer on child labour. Man's inhumanity to man is nowhere more clearly revealed in the depths of its depravity than in the exploitation of childhood. Jesus rebukes it.

Christ's prayer for the little children when answered will do several things. It will give them proper training. It will protect them from deadly dangers. It will provide homes for the helpless ones.

The character and destiny of many a child has been determined by prayer. And this praying should begin before the child is born. No child ought ever to be born who is not born in the spirit of prayer. We may go farther back than

this and say that children may be given in answer to prayer. Samuel was a prayer-gift child, and therefore a child of destiny. The genealogical line of the Saviour seemed broken at Abraham; but long after there was any chance by nature, the prayer of God's handmaid broke over all the bounds of nature and Isaac came. John the Baptist was God's answer to the prayer of His servant, Zacharias.

"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it," are ancient words of wisdom. But how are parents to do this properly without prayer? They need the prayers of others and need to pray much themselves for wisdom in training and teaching their children. "If any man lack wisdom let him ask of God." The responsibility of the parent and the teacher is very great. They need to know much more than "the psychology of the child mind." They need to realise the greatness and the value of life and to feel the weight of responsibility of an immortal soul.

It is the greatest honour in the world to have a child entrusted to you. Children are the gift of God. Then if God sent them, He surely desires to share the responsibility of rearing and training them. Here is an opportunity, as nowhere else, to enter into a close, heart-interest partnership with heaven. It requires a great deal of consultation with the Senior Partner of this big business of training children to conduct it aright.

Judge Ben Lindsey, head of the juvenile court of Denver, says: "My experience, study and investigation of juvenile life has convinced me that parents need to be taught the fundamentals of child rearing. I firmly believe that not more than twenty per cent of parents are relatively, and comparatively, competent to raise children."

Not only the parents, but the teachers who have the children so many hours each week, should pray much. God be praised for every public school teacher who realises the responsibility of his or her position and who devoutly petitions Almighty God every day for wisdom and grace to meet the obligations and opportunities imposed by the care and training of children. God have mercy upon us when the teacher has no concern for the character of the child, but who is in the school room only for so much per month on which she can play high society. Have mercy also on the children whose school-teacher is nervous and irritable because her vitalities are sapped by nightly dances and theatre parties.

The nation owes a debt of lasting gratitude to that great army of noble, self-sacrificing, underpaid public-school teachers who are in the work because they have followed the gleam of idealistic inspiration. They are the praying teachers. Whether or not they are permitted to pray publicly in the school room, they can and do pray privately for their children. And they teach as much by example as by precept. Their character is a

living lesson. God bless them. We parents should pray for them, too.

The prayers of Jesus for children, and ours, too, if answered, would save little children from many dangers seen and unseen. The child is in constant danger of harm to body, mind and soul. Why more of them do not lose their lives is a mystery. And there are all sorts of poisons floating around in school and on the streets for their plastic little minds to catch up. Their souls are in daily danger. How are these dangers to be warded off? By that wisdom which cometh down from above which is given in answer to prayer.

Parents should pray for their children's health, asking God for sense enough to provide the children with wholesome food, plenty of sleep, outdoor work and exercise. Many a child's health is permanently injured for life because it is allowed to eat all sorts of trash and is hauled around at night to picture shows when it should be in bed. A sensible, praying parent would not do that.

In a remote district of Wales a baby boy lay dangerously ill. The widowed mother walked five miles through the night in a drenching rain to get a doctor. The doctor hesitated about making the unpleasant trip. Was it really necessary and would it pay? He knew he would receive no money for his services, and besides the child, if his life was saved, would probably be nothing more than an ordinary labourer. But love for

humanity and a sense of professional duty controlled him, and the child was saved. Years afterward when this child, David Lloyd George, became Chancellor of the Exchequer, the old doctor said: "I never dreamed that in saving the life of that child I was saving the life of a national leader."

The health of all children should be preserved, for who knows whether this one or that one shall be a great world character. But whether they become so or not, they will be worth more to the nation and the world if they have sound and healthy bodies.

The parsonage at Epworth, England, was on fire one night, and Samuel Wesley, the father, rushed through the hallway to the rescue of his children. Seven children were out and safe on the ground, but one remained in the burning building. That one awakes, finds his bed on fire and the house crumbling in, comes to the window and two or more peasants make a ladder of their bodies, one standing on the shoulders of the other, and down the human ladder the boy descends—John Wesley.

It is impossible to say how much depends on that living ladder throughout the world with its millions of men and women, blessed and saved, and all the agencies of the Methodist church at home and abroad stand as a result of the great and gracious work done by that human ladder in that ever memorable hour. That stairway of

peasants' shoulders is an example of ten thousand good results achieved by kindly and timely influences exercised in circumstances of danger and pressing need. The human agency, properly directed, is one of the most potent forces in every phase of the world's life, and by it and through it in every age the most beneficent results have been achieved.

Parents and pastors and teachers need a great deal of prayer, grace and wisdom for the protection of their children against the mental miasma of the day. It is a jazz age in which we are living. Much of the mental pabulum upon which the people are fed is not conducive to the growth of great intellects. The daily papers with their funny-page sections, and moving pictures with their silly vulgarities, the average conversation of fun and foolishness, and even that theory in education which argues for moving along the line of least resistance, are all working toward the weakening of mentality and the devitalisation of intellectual energy, rather than the growing of great minds. Those who have a serious interest in the future of the children, and the consequent future of the nation and the world, must strive somehow to overcome this tendency. And prayer must be one of the great agencies through which it is done.

Not only do dangers beset the bodies and minds of childhood, but there are also many pitfalls for their spiritual life. Much of the literature and

amusements of the day have not only a weakening tendency for the mind, but a positively hurtful effect on the soul. They dull the spiritual sensibilities and blunt the finer qualities of the soul.

The morals of the movies are most miserable. Any one with any moral sensibilities who attends the average moving picture will observe this.

Their billboards blaze forth in lurid colours the most sensational stuff. And on the inside the screen portrays the most sordid conditions of humanity. Blood and thunder, wild west stuff, murders, suicides, domestic infidelity, divorce, robberies, thefts, prohibition violations, criminal men, vile women, nude bathroom scenes, bedroom scenes in night clothes, hugging, kissing, dancing, carousing, licentiousness, libertinism, law violations, deceit, fraud, and such like are familiar screen scenes.

When the mind of youth is constantly fed upon these things, what will the harvest be? We are really beginning already to reap the harvest of ten years of such sowing. It is the power of suggestiveness which makes such possibilities for bad in bad pictures.

The multiplication of murders, the increased suicides, the growing divorce evil, the crime waves, which are apparent to all, must be charged largely to what the picture people themselves claim are the most influential moulders of ideals in this nation, namely, the moving picture playhouses.

Nothing can stay the mind of these impious foes of childhood like intense, believing prayer. No wonder that fond fathers and mothers brought their little children to Jesus, that He might lay His hands upon them and pray. All the more do the children of our day need prayer.

The prayers of Jesus for little children will also provide help for the helpless and homes for the fatherless. It is the Christ Spirit alone that exalts childhood, preserves its life, values its future and provides for its needs. Where Christ's prayers for the children have never been heard there the girl baby, especially, is an unwelcome guest, and child widows are multiplied. The Christ prayer for children puts tenderness in the heart toward them and builds orphans' homes for those who need them.

Earnest prayers for the children while they are young, properly supported by wholesome discipline, diligent instruction and careful training, will save many a heartache for the future.

It is a tremendously important moment in the home life when the new child arrives and especially if it is the first one. This is a good time for the pastor to call and a most appropriate time for family worship. If it has not been previously done it is an opportune time to establish the family altar.

Much more might be made, in the non-liturgical churches, especially, of children's day or cradle-roll day in the Sunday school. If proper prepara-

tion has been made for it, the special prayer for the children on those days, and for the fathers and mothers of the children, will abide through life as a never-ending blessing.

Lord, teach us to pray, even as Thou didst pray, for the little children.

"O Thou great Father of the weak, lay Thy hand tenderly on all the little children on the earth and bless them. Bless our own children who are the life of our life, and who have become the heart of our heart. Bless every little child friend who has leaned against our knee and refreshed our soul by its smiling trustfulness. Be good to all children who crave in vain for human love, or for flowers and water, and the sweet breast of nature. But bless with a three-fold blessing the young lives whose slender shoulders are already bowed beneath the yoke of toil, and whose glad growth is being stunted forever. Let not their little bodies be utterly sapped and their minds given over to stupidity and the vices of an empty soul. We have all jointly deserved the millstone of Thy wrath for making these little ones to stumble and fall. Grant all employers of labour stout hearts to refuse enrichment at such a price. Grant to all the citizens and officers of states which now permit this wrong the grace of holy anger. Help us to realise that every child in our nation is in very truth our child, a member of our great family. By the Holy Child that nestled in Mary's bosom, by the memories of our own

childhood joys and sorrows, by the sacred possibilities that slumber in every child, we beseech Thee to save us from killing the sweetness of young life by the reed of gain."—(Rauschenbusch.)

Prayers for children will go on blessing them long after the one who offered the prayer is dead. Many a loving mother has died with a broken heart over the unanswered prayer for a wayward son or thoughtless daughter. But perhaps at the grave, or even long years afterward, the sinner comes home to God and the parent's prayer was answered. There are aged people now living who will bear testimony that they are still the beneficiaries of prayers offered for them in childhood.

Many a life has been thrust out into the great field of Christian service by parental prayer. John G. Paton says it was his father's prayer that sent him to the Hebrides. In the chimney corner on the outside of the house, when a lad, he heard his father's voice in earnest prayer for the mission fields.

There are great numbers of strong men in the pulpit to-day and in theological chairs and on mission fields, because a consecrated mother prayed for a preacher son. If there is a lack of ministers anywhere it is because parents and teachers are not praying for them. The way to get them is prescribed in the Scriptures: "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that He shall thrust forth labourers into the harvest." And if children hear that

prayer often enough they will also hear the voice of God calling them to answer that prayer and will soon be saying, "Here, Lord, am I, send me, send me."

There is nothing that pays such dividends as praying for children. No wonder that Jesus stopped everything else and put His hands on little children and prayed for them.

IV

HIS PRAYER OF PERMISSION

"And He went a little farther and fell on His face and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt."—*Matthew* 26:39.

"He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, Thy will be done."—*Matthew* 26:42.

"And He left them and went away again and prayed the third time saying the same words."—*Matthew* 26:44.

The biggest thing in human life is the divine will. The highest heights to which a soul can rise is to be able to say, sincerely and truly, "Thy will be done."

God has a definite plan for the world and for each and every man in it. The finest thing a man can do is to discover what that plan is for his own life and to do it. This is what Jesus did, supremely.

From the beginning of His earthly career He faced the cross. A legend says that while yet a child He stood, one day, in the door of His foster father's carpenter shop, just as the evening sun was going behind the western hills, and, stretch-

ing out His arms, made the shadow of a perfect cross on the floor. While this is only a legend it, no doubt, illustrates what He saw from the beginning.

And everywhere, along His pathway, He was constantly reminded of that coming cross. Even in the transfiguration glory when the heavenly visitors came to confer with Him, Moses spake with Him concerning "the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem."

This cross was the Father's will from the beginning. It was the only way by which human redemption could be accomplished, and human redemption was the object of His visit to this earth. At the end of it all Jesus could truly say: "I have glorified Thee on the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do."

Whatever there may have been in His mind expressed by the words, "let this cup pass from me," I do not believe for one moment that He was seeking to evade the cross. This cup may be a divine mystery into which mere mortals might not seek to penetrate, but the mystery of the cross, even though it be a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greek, is both the power of God and the wisdom of God to them that believe.

Whatever it was over which Jesus stumbled and under which He staggered when He said "let this cup pass from me," the glorious part about the prayer is that He immediately rose trium-

phant over the difficulty and temptation, exclaiming, "Nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt!"

God's will is the best thing for every human life. Out of the path of God's will there are jangling inharmonies, unbearable burdens and calamitous failures.

To say, "Thy will be done," does not mean stoical submission to a burdensome and hard decree, but it means cheerful co-operation with a Divine and benevolent purpose. God's will is not passive, but active. He sees and knows the future as we cannot. What may appear to be our greatest loss to-day because of God's will, will turn out to be, under that benevolent purpose, our greatest gain for to-morrow.

If Jesus were praying to be delivered from the cross, and He had persisted in it against the Father's will He would have lost all His triumphs over Satan, all the souls of the world, and His own greatest glory. But giving Himself in cheerful, willing and active co-operation to the will of the Father, He led captivity captive, triumphed over death, hell and the grave, gave gifts to men and abides ever as the Lord of all.

Many a poor miserable soul has found great discomfort in the assertion of his own self-will and in the rejection of God's will. I know a poor mother who prayed for her sixteen-months-old child to be spared from death at whatever cost, regardless of the future and the future consequences. She set up her own will above all others

for it to live. The child lived and has been for forty years a helpless infant, the greatest care and sorrow of that family circle.

Two men felt called of God to go with our soldiers overseas during the World War. The family of one of them, after prayer and in love and loyalty to God, said to the husband and father, "It is His will; you go." The wife of the other rebelled and refused, saying, "We cannot get along without him; he cannot go with our consent."

The one who went did a great service for God, won thousands of souls to the Lord Jesus and returned home to find that the family had been kept in perfect health through the ravages of the terrible influenza epidemic, while the other man who had been kept at home had fallen victim to the deadly disease, and the wife, in the shadows of her widowhood, was forced to acknowledge that the human will was not always the best.

Thoughtless persons sometimes say, "to do so and so, though God wills it, will cost too much," failing to remember that not to do God's will may cost a great deal more. It is not God's will that is expensive, but rebellion against it.

A man who had been a useful Christian worker for many years came upon a day of terrible testing. He wrote in his diary, "Sleepless nights and headaches and shattered nerves and broken health are all the results of the controversy I was hav-

ing with God." Oh, these controversies we have with God! Jonah had a controversy with God about going as a foreign missionary, and three days and nights in the whale's belly was the price he paid. Jacob had a controversy with God and wrestled with His messenger about it all night, and as a result was lame the rest of his life. Eli had a controversy with God about his boys: They got the best and he gave God second place. Their terrible death was the result. The church at Corinth had a controversy with God about the Lord's Supper: Many of them were weak; some of them sickly and others died.

We should be careful to distinguish between God's permissive will and God's directive will. All that is and all that transpires are within the circle of God's permissive will. This does not make Him the author of sin or sickness or suffering. God's directive will comprehends only that which is good and that which is meant to accomplish the highest good for all concerned. For a parent to permit the child on the floor to touch a heated stove that it might learn the lesson that fire burns and thus save it from being burned alive in the future, is different from that parent who by superior physical strength takes the child's hand and wilfully thrusts it into a red-hot fire. Whatever God permits of suffering or sorrowing to come upon His child, is meant for the child's highest good, "For we know that all things

work together for good to them who love God." Only "to them that love God," however, all things do not work together for good to all people.

To know what God's will is concerning one's life, or any of the details thereof, is the privilege of every child of God. It is God's desire that we shall know His will. That a man may know what is that good and perfect and acceptable will of God is the supreme effort of the Divine One. He is the self-revealing God, seeking always to make known His Divine plans.

It is possible to find out His will upon many matters by searching the Scriptures: "For this is the will of God even your sanctification" (I Thessalonians 4:3). "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God concerning you!" (I Thessalonians 5:18). "For so is the will of God that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (I Peter 3:17). "That you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (Colossians 4:12). The great apostolic benediction was "Make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever, Amen" (Hebrews 13:21).

We may find God's will by being *willing to obey it,* yea, by obeying it. "If any man wills to do God's will he shall know of the teaching" (John 7:17). If we are honest in our prayer when we

say, "Thy will be done," we mean that we are willing to help answer that prayer.

Too frequently we map out our own plans for life and then ask God to help us execute them, instead of first surrendering our lives to Him to help execute His plans. There are a great many Balaamites, self-willed, who need converting from their perverse ways, even if it requires the voice of a dumb ass to do it. Why should God make known His will to a man, who, He knows beforehand, does not intend to do it and will not do it? That man will never know anything of God. But the submissive, willing, obedient child may know fully and immediately what the Father's will is.

We may find out the will of the Father by being, "not conformed to this world but transformed by the renewing of your minds that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." The expression in this Scripture to "prove" means, to try, to test, to approve. To know the will of God the test must be made in the spiritual laboratory of a complete consecration. One cannot hear the voice of God in the midst of the din and confusion of the world's commerce, nor in the swish and the swirl of questionable social gaieties.

If Fra Angelico found it impossible to paint angel faces after a night of carousal, how much less can the servant of God expect to hear angel voices after worldly debauches. If the telescope

which is to peer far into the mysteries of the heavens must be taken far away from the rumbling of the city's commerce and from the smoky, dusty atmosphere of the city's life, how much more must the child of God who is to see clearly the will and way of the Father separate himself from all the contaminating influences of worldly ways and unspiritual associations.

Again, we may find the will of the Father by prayer and supplication. Abraham and Moses and Paul and John prayed for a revelation of the Divine will and were told exactly what to do.

Gideon found the will of God by asking for a definite sign, and so may we (Judges 6:36ff.). His fleece of wool was wet or dry, alternately, according to his request, that thus God's will be made known. A bright high school student was in doubt as to whether or not God wanted him to be a minister of the gospel. He asked for a definite sign that he might know and he received it that very night. To-day he is happy in his third year of college preparation for the lifework of a medical missionary.

When struggling with the question as to whether or not I should accept the call of another church and change my pastorate, I asked for some definite indication, on the following Sunday, as to whether my work was finished where I was. Without any special effort or planning for it, the following Sunday morning sixteen happy souls were converted and joined the church. This was

taken as the index finger of God pointing out the path in which to walk, and in a thousand ways that has been confirmed as the will of God.

Sometimes we hear one say, "If God would speak audibly out of the heavens and tell me what He wants me to do I would not hesitate one moment to do it." Well, I believe that it is just as possible and as easy now for us to know God's will as it was then for Abraham or Paul to whom He spoke directly in audible voice.

In his life of Henry Drummond, Dr. George Adam Smith has inserted the following Eight Maxims on how to know God's will, that he found inscribed on the flyleaf of Mr. Drummond's Bible:

"First. Pray.

"Second. Think.

"Third. Talk to wise people, but do not regard their decisions as final.

"Fourth. Beware of the bias of your own will, but do not be too much afraid of it. (God never unnecessarily thwarts a man's nature and likings, but it is a mistake to think that His will is the line of the disagreeable.)

"Fifth. Meantime do the next thing (for doing God's will in small things is the best preparation for knowing it in great things).

"Sixth. When decision and action are necessary go ahead.

"Seventh. Never reconsider the decision when it is finally acted upon.

"Eighth. You will probably not find out until afterwards—long afterwards perhaps—that you have been led at all."

In saying "not as I will but as thou wilt" Jesus did not find his own will broken, but found it strengthened in conscious co-operation with a higher and better will.

"Thus of life's essence 'tis in this blessed home
To be conformed to the will Divine,
Whereby our wills one with His will become,
So that as all from grade to grade forth shine
Through this realm—thus is it pleasing to all
As to the king to whose will we incline,
In His will is our peace. Toward it
All things haste. It is the sea toward which flow
What it creates and nature makes."

—Dante
Par: 3:77-87.

We should be able to sing with Tennyson:

"Our wills are ours, we know not why;
Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

Or with Hannah More:

"Oh, be my will so swallowed up in Thine
That I may do Thy will in doing mine."

The greatest, noblest and happiest souls of all the earth are those who can truthfully say:

"Laid on thine altar, O my Lord Divine,
Accept this gift to-day for Jesus' sake:
I have no jewels to adorn thy shrine,
No far-famed sacrifice to make;

But here with my trembling hand I bring
This will of mine—a thing that seemeth small
But Thou alone, O Lord, canst understand
How when I yield Thee this, I yield mine all."

"Lord, teach us to pray," as He prayed,
"Thy will be done."

SECTION III: THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS AS SERVANT

SEEN IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK—
1:35, 7:34, 14:22, 15:34

SECTION III: THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS AS SERVANT

I

HIS MORNING WATCH

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."—*Mark* 1: 35.

Mark's Gospel is characterised by movement and action, yet it is punctuated here and there with periods of quiet seclusion. In this verse it is definitely stated that the Lord's purpose in withdrawing from the crowds was to pray. The previous day had been a very busy one. He had been engaged in healing the sick until after sundown. He had also no doubt had His evening prayer, but He could snatch only a few hours of sleep for the recuperation of the tired body.

Early in the morning He must be up and out and at His task of praying. The habit of prayer demands not only an appropriate place, but an appropriate time. Daniel prayed morning, noon and night. God said to Moses, "Come up in the morning and present thyself to me in the top of the mount." This is the best time to meet the Lord. We have a tryst with God in the morn-

ing. Moses kept his tryst. "And Moses rose up early in the morning and went up."

Jesus, who was to be like unto Moses in all things, must needs "go up early in the morning to the mount of prayer." He kept His morning watch. This is the best hour of the day for prayer. What glories must have shone round about that place as the Lord at the dawn of the morning was seen kneeling in prayer!

Did ever such a scene in all earth's events greet the rising sun as this vision of the Lord at prayer? More than one million four hundred thousand times, since Adam walked in the Garden of God, with the dews of eternal youth upon his brow, had the sun emerged upon the earth, while "the clouds in awful tumult flew open the azure sky." But, never before had it smiled with such radiant glow upon man in the exercise of his earthly privileges, as it did, now, upon the Lord at prayer.

> "The rosy-fingered morn did there disclose,
> His beauty, ruddy as a blooming bride,
> Gilding the marigold, painting the rose,
> With Indian chrysolites his cheeks were dyed."

"A great while before day." What a lesson for us poor sleepy-headed, sluggish mortals!

How it convicts us of sin. How far short we fall of the Master's method in prayer. With most of us it is, "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep." So our

spiritual poverty comes as one that travaileth and spiritual want as an armed man.

"A great while before day" is easy enough if there is a train to catch, or a fishing frolic on, or a hunting trip, but "a great while before day" for no other purpose than to pray is an experience known to far too few. Yet if character is to be moulded into a likeness to Jesus the experience of prayer "a great while before day" must be often repeated.

Biographies of the greatest saints reveal the fact that the "great while before day" experience was common to them all. Dr. Adam Clark, the great Commentator, was a very early riser. A young preacher regretting his inability to follow Doctor Clark's example was anxious to know the secret of his success. "Do you pray about it?" inquired the youth. "No," Dr. Clark replied, "I get up."

We need to keep ever before our faces the wisdom of that old saying, "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise." Men who have moved the world have been poor sleepers. Napoleon slept only five hours of the night. Just enough sleep is very good and essential, but too much sleep is destructive of all that is worth while in life.

The early morning is the best time for prayer, because with the dawning of the new day there is the birth of new hopes. There is also fresh-

ness, new energy and new powers, and the right sort of praying requires all of these. It is good that we can pray for renewed strength when exhausted at the evening time; but it is better to pray in the fulness of our morning powers that God may guide and direct the renewed energies. The right sort of prayer requires just the energy which at the early morning hour one is capable of best exerting.

Then again the early morning hour is the best time for prayer because the Lord's mercies are new every morning. If we come to Him for these mercies at the morning hour we can appropriate them in their freshness and beauty and glory for use throughout the entire day.

The early morning hour is the best time for prayer because God should be put first. He should be first in our thoughts, and first in our daily considerations. An old southern negro is known to have the habit when he awakes in the morning of saying, "Good morning, God." These are always his first words. "In the beginning God"—in the beginning of the day, in the beginning of business, in the beginning of the home —God.

"Every day is a fresh beginning,
Every morn is the world made new,
You who are weary of sorrow and sinning,
Here is a beautiful hope for you—
A hope for me and a hope for you.

"Every day is a fresh beginning;
Listen, my soul, to the glad refrain,
And in spite of old sorrow and older sinning,
And puzzles forecasted and possible pain,
Take heart with the day and begin again."

But whether we sleep long or little, whether we rise early or late, the first thought should be God, not the morning paper, not breakfast, not business—but God.

Is it any wonder that there is a cry all over the land of depleted spiritual powers and of departed reverence when the first thing of the day with most children and young people, and especially on the Lord's Day, is the funny pictures of the daily paper? And the first thing of the day, especially the Lord's Day, *even* for grown-ups, is the sensational headlines? I do not want to sound any dirge of despair, but it must be clear to all that if the great sore of humanity's hurt is ever to be healed it must be done by putting God first. There is no doubt in the mind of any one who thinks that a great many more of God's people, even most all of them, if possible, would bring incomparable blessings upon the world if they would get up early in the morning, "a great while before day and go out to pray."

II

HIS PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

"And looking up to heaven, He sighed, and saith unto Him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened."—*Mark* 7:34.

Disease is of the devil. Health is wealth from God. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8). He therefore attacks the works of the devil in the physical, mental and spiritual world. In this case His effort is directed by prayer toward the destruction of the devil's work of deforming the human body.

The human body is the epitome of the universe. Its physical nature reaches down to all created things below it. Its intellectual nature reaches out in fellowship with all other intellects. Its spiritual nature or immortal being reaches up to the heights where dwell the spirits of just men made perfect and even God Himself.

The human body is a sacred thing. Christ desired that it should be kept healthy, wholesome, and clean. To this end He prayed and worked.

One of the greatest arguments to be found anywhere for the sacredness of the human body is in I Corinthians 6:12-20. With that profound philosophy, with that clearness of vision and in-

cisiveness of logic which characterised the great Paul, four arguments are presented in vindication of the proposition that the body is sacred to God.

1. The body should be taken care of because God is going to raise it up at the last day (v. 18).

2. The body should be taken care of because it is a member of Christ, and the members of Christ should not be made the members of an harlot (v. 15).

3. The body should be taken care of because it is the temple of the Holy Ghost which we have of God. Surely God's dwelling place on the earth should be kept clean and pure (v. 19).

4. The body should be taken care of because it is the object of Christ's redeeming grace, having been bought with a price (v. 20).

We should, therefore, glorify God in our bodies, which are His.

Christianity is the only religion which has ever taken any account of the human body, and which lays it under contribution to accomplish a holy end for the glory of God. Since Jesus came and prayed for the healing of human bodies and reached out His hand and touched them with Divine health-giving power there has been a high regard in the world for their sacredness.

Non-Christian views of the body are expressed at one extreme by asceticism and at the other by licentiousness. Heathenism says, "Eat, drink and be merry, to-morrow ye die." Christianity says, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy,

acceptable unto God." Stoicism is the highest expression of heathenism toward the protection of the human body, and suicide is stoicism acknowledging itself defeated. Asceticism is Christianity acknowledging itself defeated. It is an effort to achieve by self-will that which God has already provided through Christ. It is faith's failure to lay hold upon that which is within its reach.

Satan and Christ are in eternal conflict for the possession and control of human bodies: Satan, as the author of sin and sickness, seeking to destroy them; Christ, as the author of health and happiness, seeking to exalt them.

That Satan is the author of disease is clearly revealed in the Scriptures.

"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil" (Job 1), but God for purposes of His own sovereign grace let Satan loose on this man Job and among the many calamities which Satan brought upon him were terrible diseases.

One day when Jesus was teaching in the synagogue there came with the crowd a bowed and bent and broken woman, whom Satan had bound for eighteen years, that she might be loosed from this bond by the Lord. It is here stated that her disease was of the devil (Luke 13:16).

In Acts 10:38 Jesus is pictured as "One who

went about doing good and healing all that *were oppressed of the devil.*"

On the other hand, it is also clearly revealed in the Scriptures that healing is of the Lord. In Exodus 15:26 Jehovah makes a gracious promise to Israel, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." This promise was made upon condition that Israel should diligently hearken unto the voice of the Lord God, and do that which is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments and keep his statutes. How faithfully this promise of God was kept is described in Psalms 105:37: "He brought them forth also with silver and gold; and there *was not one feeble person* among their tribes." What a tremendous power that church would be to-day of which it could be said that they were so faithful to the voice of God, loyal to his commandments, and true to his statutes that there could not be found one feeble person among them. Such a church would be clothed with omnipotent power in any community and would be the most popular institution in any city.

In Psalms 103:3, the peak of praise is reached in the exclamation, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases."

In Isaiah 53:4 we are told that our healing is provided for in the atonement of Christ: "He hath borne our griefs and carried our sicknesses and with his stripes we are healed." He poured out his soul unto death for the redemption of our

souls and bore in His body the sins and diseases of our bodies. This Scripture is interpreted in Matthew 8:17. Jesus found Peter's wife's mother sick of a fever, and touching her hand the fever left her. "They also brought unto him many that were possessed with devils and he cast out the spirits and healed all that were sick." All of this, it is explained, was done "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses" (Matthew 8:14-17).

Is it not clear from the Scriptures that disease is of the devil and that health is from the Lord; that Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, namely, disease; that the two are in mortal conflict the one with the other and that Jesus' method of destroying disease was by prayer for and faith in the consequent manifestation of Divine power?

But was this ministry to continue after His going away? Did He not perform these miracles simply for a testimony of His Divinity that the people of that day might believe? Let us see what saith the Scriptures:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

Some of Jesus' greatest works were works of healing. And it has come to pass that wherever His name is known there the science of medicine,

the blessed ministry of hospitals and sanitation reach their highest points of efficiency. But these agencies for the alleviation of human suffering do not represent the full measure of that healing ministry which is to manifest itself among Christ's disciples. Beyond the highest agencies of medical science or surgery, when human wisdom and skill have reached their limit, there lies Divine power which in response to prayer may be brought to bear upon deadly disease for its Divine healing.

Mark 16:18 contains the promise to the disciples that they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. This has literally been done thousands of times. Romans 8:11 indicates the personal agency by which it is to be done. The Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you. This means, of course, the Holy Spirit.

There is a condition, however, "If this Spirit dwells in you." This raises the question as to whether any except saved people can claim the ministry of Divine healing. I think they cannot. The expression, "quicken your mortal bodies," does not refer to the resurrection of the dead as many have been led to believe. But it means to make alive our depleted vitalities.

The climactic text on this subject is, of course, James 5:14-15: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let

them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."

Jesus undoubtedly means by His prayer for the sick, not only to accomplish a definite end at that time, but also to give an example for all believers who should come after Him.

And it is the testimony of many devout believers who have earnestly, honestly and conscientiously tested this matter that it is true that God heareth prayers in behalf of the sick.

The pastor of a great church in a Northwestern city tells of a woman who had been upon her bed a helpless invalid for fifteen years. She heard of his faith in prayer for the sick and sent for him. He went with the elders of the church and, as the Scriptures direct, anointed her with oil, the symbol of the Holy Ghost, and they prayed for her healing. That very day she got out of bed and went to prayer meeting that night. When the prayer meeting group was testifying to the sweetest songs they knew, she stood up to say that the sweetest music she ever heard was the music of "my old clogs on the street pavement to-night coming to the house of God, made possible by prayer and the ministry of Divine healing after fifteen years of absence."

Dr. Cortland Myers tells of a mother who was sick unto death whose loved ones sent for him.

Seeing her desperate condition and realising that nothing short of Divine power could bring her back to health, he asked that all unbelievers should leave the room, allowing only those to remain who had absolute confidence in God. They would put Him to the final test. They prayed and the sick woman arose and sat up and was given back to her family as one from the dead.

I was lecturing to a large group of young people in a summer assembly and, speaking upon the power of prayer, gave expression to some such faith as is herein set down. The president of a school arose and asked me if I really believed what I was preaching. I replied that if I did not believe it I would throw away my Bible and quit preaching, because it has always been my profoundest conviction that the pulpit is no place for infidels. This college president then said, "If you believe that God will do such things in answer to prayer, then I challenge your faith to pray now for a great and useful Christian man who is a director of this assembly, but who at this moment the doctors say is dying of blood poison." When a Christian gets into a close place like this he had better know his Bible. So the Scripture at once came to me: "If two or three of you shall agree on anything it shall be done." I replied that if there were one or more others who believed as I did and who would be willing to put God to the test, we would accept the challenge and stake the destiny of our souls for time and

eternity upon God's faithfulness to meet it. A number of others stood to say that they believed it. It was a time which demanded Elijah's conquering faith to stake his all upon the loyalty of his Lord and to march straight to the top of Carmel. After quoting another promise or two we knelt in prayer. The brother who led the prayer said something like this: "O God, our Father, Thou knowest that in this community infidels have laughed at Thy people and have scoffed at Thy Son. But we love Thee and believe in Thee and for the honor of Thy Son come to ask that Thou shalt do this great thing for us. Touch the dying body of our beloved brother with Thy healing hand; rebuke the disease this moment and bring him here to this meeting sound and well, so that our faith in Thee may be vindicated, the power of Christ may be justified and the mouth of gainsayers may be stopped." At the close of this prayer, for it was late in the evening, all but a few went to their couches for rest. These few continued in prayer.

At the morning service next day I arose to speak again. I reminded the audience of the prayer of the evening before and of our confident expectation that God would answer. "But," I said, "this brother for whom we prayed is not here. Has our God forgotten us? Is His mercy clean gone forever? How many of you expected that this brother for whom we prayed should walk in here to-day, sound and well?" The entire

group of believers who had stood the night before stood again to assert their unwavering confidence in God. "But," said I, "our God has forgotten us. He has not heard our prayer. The answer has not come. We will be the laughing stock of all the community." It was a tense moment. Elijah himself was never at a more trying crisis. Would the God who answers by fire respond to the faith of this band of believers? We had one more prayer and at the close of that prayer, blessed be the God of Elijah, the brother came in walking calmly down the aisle and sat on the front seat. A shout of praise went up. God was glorified and His believing children justified.

A pastor's wife had been in the sanitarium for an operation. In her weakened condition just upon returning home she contracted typhoid fever. There were other complications, the physician said. She was literally burning up with fever 103 and 104 degrees. On the fifth day a blood test was made; other physicians were called for consultation and they said there was not one chance in a thousand for her to live. There was only one other source: "Standeth God within the shadows keeping watch above His own." The case would be put in His hands. The Greatest Physician of all would be called in for the final consultation. Her father is also a preacher of prayer and faith. A telegram was sent to him explaining the situation. He got a group together

in a distant city and they prayed far into the night. The pastor himself went out and for the first time spent an entire night in prayer. He lifted before the Father's face the children, the church, the kingdom of Christ and the Lord's servant, all of which would be affected detrimentally if she should go at this time. At best he knew it was an unselfish prayer; it was a prayer for God's glory and honour. At the dawn of another new day he stole back into the room to ask the nurse how the battle was going. She replied that the strangest experience of her many years of nursing had just come to her. The fever had left the patient and she was sleeping as sweetly and as quietly as a babe. The pastor stole quietly over to the bed where the first streaks of the morning light were falling upon her face and knelt by the bedside to thank God for answered prayer, for Divine intervention, for healing power. When the physician came that morning he expected to find her dead and he found her sitting up perfectly well.

There remains one question more to be answered: If the above be true then should Christian people discard physicians and medicine and look wholly to the Lord for healing? The answer must be an emphatic NO. To do so would be presumptuous sin. It would amount to dictating to God as to how He should accomplish His purpose. If God should choose to use the human agencies of physicians and medicines for healing, who am

I that I should say, "No, I will not have it that way; unless you do it directly I will not have it at all." God uses human agents even in the salvation of souls, for it has pleased Him "by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." How much more easily may He use human agents for the saving of human bodies. To renounce the use of human agencies in healing would be to put ourselves in the same category with those who say, "There is no need for preachers, teachers, soul-winners or missionaries, because God will save by direct operation those whom He wishes."

But this does not annul the possibility of reaching up to God for Divine healing when all human agencies have reached their limit and have done all that they know.

III

HIS PRAYER IN THE SINNER'S PLACE

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"—*Mark* 15:34.

This is the fourth cry of Christ from the cross. Three had gone before and there are three to follow. This prayer stands in the very centre of Christ's words on the cross. This is the upright beam of the cross, while the other six words which Jesus uttered hanging there, hang, three on one arm and three on the other arm of the cross. This cry is the intensest and most heart-rending of them all.

This cry comes out of the darkness which had hung over the earth for three mortal hours. At the birth of Christ there was an extraordinary light which guided the pilgrim feet of the wise men to the manger in Bethlehem, but at His crucifixion there is an extraordinary darkness which covers the face of the whole earth. Dionysius of Heliopolis in Egypt is on record as having said at this time, though he knew nothing of Jesus of Nazareth: "Either the God of Nature is suffering or the machinery of the world is tumbling to ruin." During this three hours of darkness there

was not a word but perfect silence. What silence it was!

But the silence is broken by the loud and piercing cry from that breaking heart: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" And though we may not peer into this darkness to seek that which God has, thereby, in His wise providence concealed yet may we in reverence listen to these words of our Lord and learn from them something of the awfulness of that passion which He endured when He was "made a curse for us."

Let it be our prayer that our understanding of these words may not be as distorted as was the understanding of those who stood by the cross and heard the cry. He spoke in the Syriac, "Eloi, Eloi," and the crucifiers made as if they understood Him to say, "Elias." What strange impressions come to ears that are not opened by the Spirit of God and what strange misunderstandings there may be to those who are not enlightened by the same Spirit. Misunderstanding, misinterpretation and misapplication of Divine truth are all easy and not at all unnatural when one is not guided by the Holy Ghost. The prayer should ever be, that Divine light from Him may shine upon every page and paragraph and sentence and word from which truth is being sought.

This cry of the Christ from the cross was the only complaint He ever uttered, if, indeed, this is a complaint. He suffered poverty, rejection, loneliness without a whine or a whimper. The

birds of the air had nests and the foxes had holes, but He had not where to lay His head; and yet never a word of protest. "He came unto His own," His own people, His own kith and kin, of the same blood and bone, but even "His own received Him not"; and He never complained. He knew beforehand that the disciples would forsake Him, and even though Peter protested his loyalty Jesus reminded him that three times would he deny Him. And now as He comes to the last tragic hour there is no one to do Him honour. Even the beloved John stands at a great distance and Christ is left alone. But He does not complain even about this. He endures the intensest physical suffering that was ever forced upon any human being, and He was a man, not of coarse nature, such as had scant feeling and little ability to suffer, but a man of the finest fibre, most keenly sensitive to any pain. And yet at this suffering He opens not His mouth. Like a sheep at the slaughter and a lamb before its shearer, He was dumb. But now that His Father's face is turned away from Him it is more than He can bear. This one time of all the agonies of earth's sufferings He cries out in utter desolation of soul, "Why hast Thou forsaken me?"

It is as if He had said: "I can understand how the Pharisees and Sadducees would have nothing to do with me and would utterly reject me; I can even understand how the disciples should forsake me, but that Thou, my Father and

my God, should forsake me, I cannot understand. Why hast *Thou* forsaken me?" It seems that the promises of God, the character of God, the faithfulness of God, would have guaranteed Him support at this time, but not so. "Why hast *Thou* forsaken me?"

Again, the emphasis may have been upon the word "*Me.*" "I can understand why Thou didst forsake King Saul of old; his disloyalty and disobedience deserved that he should be forsaken of God. I can understand how Thou didst forsake, temporarily, at least, our father David, because his sins deserved such condemnation. But why Thou hast forsaken *Me* is beyond my understanding. I have sought all my life to do nothing but Thy will. Did I not hear Thy approving voice at the baptismal waters, 'Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased'? Was not this approval repeated at the Shekinah glory of the transfiguration, and did I not speak truly when I said, I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do? Why, then, should I be forsaken of Thee? Why cannot I now see the smiling face of Thine approval and hear the blessed words, 'I am well pleased'? Why is it that I am left utterly and absolutely alone at this time? Of all the experiences of my life this one is the time when I most need help and comfort. At the temptation in the wilderness an angel came and graciously ministered to my needs. When in trouble of soul only yesterday a voice from heaven comforted me and

when in the agony of Gethsemane last night an angel appeared to strengthen me; but now there is neither the one nor the other—why hast Thou forsaken me, now?"

Why this absolute loneliness and desolateness when "one flash of heavenly light, one word spoken by God, might scatter all misery"?

If Jesus Himself must shriek, "why?" then, how may we expect to discover the mystery of it? "We feel with trembling hearts that we are here confronted with the central mystery in the life of God and in the story of this universe." It is no other than the mystery of sin and sin's consequences and God's method of dealing with sin.

God cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowance. He cannot condone sin for one moment. Sin is the exact opposite of everything that God is. There can be no common ground between them. There can be no neutral zone. There can be absolutely no compromise. God will not have fellowship with sin for one moment and now that Jesus has become sin for us God must turn away, even from Him.

How Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin is one of the great mysteries, and yet it must be so because it is declared so in the Word. Sin was *on* Him but not *in* Him. There was laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. He bore in His body our sins on the tree. And God turned away from Him only when He stood in the sinner's

place. "Though God loved Him as a Son He frowns upon Him as a surety."

Physical suffering was not enough to pay the penalty of sin. The wages of sin is death and through death is a separation from God. This is the second death. Jesus must bear in that horrible hour in His own consciousness the utmost of sin's penalty, namely, separation from God. Nothing can be more awful in experience than a soul forsaken of God. How deeply, then, this most sensitive of all souls must have felt that poignancy and bitter anguish of aloneness when God turned His back upon Him and went away.

And this is the answer to the cry, "Why hast Thou forsaken me?": "Thou art Holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

SECTION IV: THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS AS MAN

SEEN IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE—
3:21, 6:12, 9:29, 23:34, 22:39

SECTION IV: THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS AS MAN

I

HIS PRAYER AND PLAIN DUTY

"Jesus also being baptised, and praying, the heaven was opened. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased."—*Luke* 3: 21-22.

There is no record of Jesus having prayed prior to His baptism. He probably did, but it is not stated in the Gospels. Neither is there any record of His having prayed after His resurrection. Baptism prefigured His resurrection. The resurrection filled full all righteousness. Baptism was the beginning of His public ministry; the resurrection was its end.

Baptism was a plain duty which the only Begotten Son Himself could not, and would not, escape. John would have forbidden Him, saying, "I have need to be baptised of Thee," but Jesus replied, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Baptism is the answer of a good conscience toward God. It is the performance of the Christian's first plain duty.

"And being baptised Jesus prayed." I would not have it said that He could not pray before His obedience to this ordinance. I would not say that no Christian can pray until he has been baptised. But if this fact, that the first mention of the prayer life of the Lord being connected with the first public expression of obedience to God's will and conformity to God's ordinances, means anything at all, it means that prayer will be powerful only in proportion as this order is followed; namely, obedience first, prayer afterwards. If it cannot be said of Jesus Himself that He prayed until He had first performed, how much less can we expect any answer to our prayers if we are living in known disobedience to a definite duty.

Is not this moreover the whole tenor of Scriptural revelation? "And whatsoever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." Would it not be well to search our own disobedient lives for the cause of our unanswered prayers? If prayer is still unanswered it is manifestly not God's fault. Seeking our own wilful ways we build a barricade about us, over which the prayer chariot cannot pass, and we therefore fail to get the things from God for which we ask.

But prayer is more than getting things from God. Prayer is a holy, heavenly fellowship, the sweetness and glory of which are denied those who disobey.

When Jesus had walked those sixty dusty miles under the scorching rays of the Syrian sun and had yielded Himself to the fulfilment of all righteousness, being baptised at the hands of John in the Jordan, it was then that the heaven was opened; the Holy Ghost descended; and the approving voice of God was heard.

What He saw through the windows of the open heaven we know not. But visions seraphic, more glorious than ever greeted the eyes of man, must have been His. He no doubt saw Elisha's horsemen and chariots. He saw the angelic host which would be sent to minister to Him at a moment's notice. He saw the spirits of just men made perfect, His holy ancestors, and Moses and Elijah. He saw, above all, the smiling face of His Father. Baptism plus prayer became His Peniel for there He saw God face to face. Oh, what strength and courage this must have given Him for the temptations and trials and tasks which were just ahead of Him. Men live not by the things they possess but by their visions. "Where there is no vision the people perish." The horizon of Christ's vision was bounded only by the Eternities, hence the greatness of His life.

Spiritual visions are the most potent factors and forces in life; not banks, nor bonds, nor armies, nor navies; but spiritual realities constitute man's mightiest supporters. Jesus has projected His personality and power across the centuries because of the open heaven and the spiritual

vision. But back of that vision was prayer and back of His prayer was obedience. O that men would learn to obey God!

Following the prayer, which followed obedience to plain duty, came also the descent of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit is the second Person of the Divine Trinity. He was second in the creation when He brooded over the chaotic universe. He is second in the re-creation of man when He convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment. He now descends upon the Lord of Glory. Jesus has taken upon Himself the likeness of man. He has clothed Himself with human flesh and must needs be panoplied with the power of a personality above man. He needs the Holy Ghost. It is by the power of the Holy Ghost that He is to perform His miracles. It is by the power of the Holy Ghost that He is to speak His heaven-born messages. It is by the power of the Holy Ghost that He will be sustained on the cross, and by the Holy Ghost He will rise from the dead. But back of the descent of the Holy Ghost was His prayer and back of His prayer was obedience to plain duty.

"Being baptised and praying," there is also heard the approving voice, "Thou art my beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." No child of God can be well-pleasing to the Father who is living in known disobedience to the Father's will.

This is the first, but not to be the last, time that Jesus was to hear this approving word. He

heard it only when He had given Himself in beautiful humility to do the good pleasure of His Father in heaven.

Can any Christian imagine a satisfaction more gratifying than to have the approval of the Heavenly Father upon the life and conduct? But remember that it cannot be had apart from obedience to His will.

I recall most vividly an experience in my Kentucky pastorate which illustrates the necessity of duty well performed before prayer can be a real experience. It was at the close of a busy day of pastoral duties when a poor unfortunate widow came to the pastor's home to ask for assistance. The pastor's wife assured her that she and her children would be given attention on the following day. But the following day brought another round of numberless demands upon the pastor's time, and the poor woman was forgotten. The second morning afterwards I went into the study as usual for my morning devotions. At that time I was going through the Bible on my knees. It is a wonderful journey, that of going through the Bible on your knees! With my Bible open before me in the chair, I knelt for the morning reading and prayer, but the pages of the Book seemed blurred, notwithstanding I was in that great book of Colossians, where the supremacy and all-sufficiency of Christ are so wonderfully portrayed. But contrary to previous experiences, the reading yielded no sweetness of Divine revelation, and

there was no gushing fountain of living waters; there was no bread of life. It was no more than any other book of history or philosophy. What was the difficulty? I tried to pray, but prayer had no meaning. The heavens above were as brass and the earth beneath as iron, and prayer did not seem to go out of the room. "Lord, put thy finger upon the difficulty," I cried; and immediately there arose before me the spectral vision of that poor widow and her suffering children. God seemed to say, "Plain duty unperformed is the difficulty." I arose at once and went out into the biting winds of the January morning and onto the icy streets of the wintry day, to find my way into the little side street where lay the hungry woman and shivering children on a bed of straw in the corner of a mere shack. I called the coal man and made a warm fire. I called the grocery-man and had food sent. I called some of the good women of the church and had clothing brought. When these unfortunate ones had been clothed and fed and made comfortable I found my way back to my study and to the open Bible. The Bible became a new Book. Great fountains of Living Water gushed forth like an artesian well. The Holy Spirit seemed personally nearer and real, and praying became a new experience.

Duty is a hard word these days. It is an unwelcome guest. "Duty, stern daughter of the voice of God," but nevertheless duty unperformed is destructive of prayer's power, while

duty well done is a powerful promoter of prevailing prayer.

The relationship between plain duty and prayer is most vital. Let us not forget it. The best performers are the best prayers. "Have you done what I told you to do?" asks the good Father of the begging child. "If not, then what right have you to expect me to respond to your request?" Let not that disobedient child think he shall receive anything of God. But let the cheerfully obedient child know that he can get whatever he wishes from his Heavenly Father.

II

HIS PRAYER AND PLAIN LIVING

"And He withdrew Himself into the wilderness, and prayed."—*Luke* 5:16.

"And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."—*Luke* 6:12.

Some ten times it is stated in the Gospels that Jesus withdrew Himself from the crowds in order to pray. We may be able to pray in the midst of the throngs, but certainly not so well. It seems to have been a fixed habit with the Saviour to

"Go abroad
Upon the paths of nature, and when all
Its voices whisper, and its silent things
Are breathing the deep beauty of the world,
Kneel at its simple altar, and the God
Who hath the living waters shall be there."

It is that manifest desire of the Lord for the simple life which here contains such a great lesson for us. It was the simplicity of His living which made possible His prayer life. It is "in contemplation of created things by steps we may ascend to God."

It is a serious question whether luxuries and comforts and conveniences are a curse or a blessing. Great inventions may produce more physical satisfaction, but do they increase spiritual powers?

Plain food and simple, neat and modest clothing are no doubt more conducive to spiritual life than high and tasty delicacies filled with condiments, and frivolous and foolish fashions gaudily and artificially worn.

The closer one lives to nature and nature's God, the more meaningful will be his prayer life. Jesus may have performed great miracles in Capernaum and taught great lessons in Jerusalem, but the power by which He did these things must be gained out in the quiet places in "the starry shade of dim and solitary loneliness where he learned the language of another world."

So must we, if we are to be clothed with spiritual power, come often into contact with "Nature's self which is the breath of God, or His pure work by miracles revealed." It is in such times and places that doubts and fears disappear and we feel ourselves being clothed with the Divine Omnipotence.

"This sacred shade and solitude, What is it?
'Tis the felt presence of Deity,
Few are the faults we flatter when alone,
Vice sinks in her allurements, is ungilt,
And looks like other objects, black by night.
By night an atheist half believes in God."

The whir of automobiles, the glare of electric lights, the clang of street cars, the gaudiness of tinselled artificialities do not very materially aid spiritual living.

Many a spiritual-minded country Christian has soon found his feet slipping upon removal to the city. The voice that was heard so fervently in public prayer is now silenced. The prayer meeting night has given way to the country club or theatre. The little Sunday school has been forgotten, and the daily paper takes the place of the Bible. Pity 'tis, 'tis true, but true it is nevertheless.

Those who are forced by one necessity or another to live in the city, need, ever and anon, to hie themselves away to the quiet peace of some secluded spot.

If we are to live in the glorious triumphs of spirit over matter, we must constantly put the knife to the throat and guard with unremitting care against flippant social customs and godless costumes.

Those whose minds are constantly consumed with the thought, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?"—are not likely to grow great Christian characters. Those who exalt outward adornment above inward culture are not likely to grow great in grace.

Those who spend hour after hour in adorning this poor body of the flesh upon which the worms of the dust will soon feed, and devote seconds

only, if any time at all, to the preparation of the soul for public worship, are the most unwise of all earth's deluded creatures. Such persons cannot pray. They do not know the A-B-C of the prayer life. They are living only for the passing day with no thought of eternity. They are grovelling in the dust of earth when they might be revelling in the purity of God's heavenlies; they are crawling when they might be flying.

But are we not slaves of custom bound by the tyrannies of a dead past more terrible than any other that ever gripped the life of man? Mrs. Harding can wear only blue, and so all women of the land at once demand Harding blue. The Prince of Wales has his coat cut in a certain fashion, and forthwith all the tailors of the realm are overrun with demands for the one pattern. Men must suffocate, even at church, as well as elsewhere, on the hottest summer day, with at least three coverings on their bodies because custom demands it. And women must shiver on the coldest winter day with thin sleeves and low necks because Dame Fashion sitting upon her imperial throne orders it so.

How can one be prayerful under such circumstances? And what is more, if we think about it even for a moment, what must be the effect produced upon the spiritual life of men by the fashions of the opposite sex when dressing seems specially designed to display the physical form, cut low at one end and high at the other—how can a

life of prayer be produced? "Bewildered man beholds the parade of 'Vanity Fair' on the main streets, of both city and town, with its deluge of fads and fancies, frills and fripperies, and passes out in a crescendo of wonder and dismay."

Of course, there is no need for one to vex his righteous soul over the fashions of the day, because he may be assured that they shall change over night. The point is that if this be the consuming passion of one's life and being, his prayer life is likely to be proportionately decreased.

If Jesus found it necessary to go out in the quiet place to pray, how much more necessary is it for us weaker mortals.

III

HIS PRAYER AND TRANSFIGURATION GLORY

> "And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, He took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.
>
> "And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering."—*Luke* 9: 28-29.

Prayer has a tremendously transforming power. If it has become a fixed habit of life, the glory of it will work out into the face and features, character and conduct. The prayer life of Jesus, which was a great part of His whole life, reached one of its greatest climaxes in the transfiguration. It was while He was praying that the "fashion of his countenance was altered."

This glory of God that shone in the face of Jesus Christ was not a pantomime. It was not the shining of a light from the outside, but the shining forth of that which was on the inside. It was not a tacked-on glory, but an out-working splendour.

Here is a great illustration of the reflex influence of prayer. Jesus had fed His mind and

heart and life upon fellowship with the Father and upon spiritual food until they now reveal themselves in His person.

This is as tragically true of things that are bad as of things that are good. One becomes like the things he feeds upon. Down in Central Park, New York, I was watching the beasts and the birds at feeding time. There were two birds side by side in separate cages which made a great impression upon me. One of them was the vulture. He was feeding upon the filth of carrion. His feathers were ragged, dirty and filthy. His head was crusty and rusty and repulsive. His feet and beak were filthy with the food upon which he was feasting. I turned away from it with revulsion. In the other cage was a bird of paradise. He was delicately picking out of the finely winnowed grain only the soundest seeds. He was extraordinarily careful of his food. His body was beautiful. His face was delightfully pleasing to look upon. His feathers were as delicate as the finest maiden-hair fern. The fine food upon which he had fed all of his life had worked itself out into his personal appearance. The contrast between the two birds was startling. It is a great law of nature and grace that one becomes like that upon which he feeds.

Herein is the great value of private or family Bible reading and prayers just before retiring at night. Psychology teaches us that the sub-conscious mind never sleeps. It is really more active

when we are asleep than when we are awake. It certainly is more influential in the production of character during our sleeping hours than our wakeful ones because when we are awake it is consumed with outside activities. Many of us can recall the experience of having solved some mathematical problem while asleep, over which we had pondered many wakeful hours with poor success.

If one goes to bed with the beautiful thoughts of the Bible in his mind and with the conscious presence of God in his soul after prayer, he is bound to experience in life the glorious outworking of such powers. This is why the old-time family altar, with Bible reading and prayers before retiring, such as is so beautifully described in Burns' "The Cotter's Saturday Night" was such a tremendous force in the production of great men and women:

"The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal Bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy Seers that tune the sacred lyre.

. . . . . .

"Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays;
Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,'
That thus they all shall meet in future days;

There ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere."

In contrast to this sort of influence upon character, what will the harvest be when present-day influences of the funny paper, the dance halls and the picture shows have worked themselves out fully into the life and character of the people? Think of the children and young people of the nation whose last impressions before retiring at night are the blood and thunder, crime and cruelty, licentiousness and lasciviousness, dirt and devilishness of the average commercialised moving picture show! From eight to ten hours of sleep the mind is feeding itself and filling the life blood and nerve force of the person with these destructive influences.

It is a great law of both nature and grace, and its consequences cannot possibly be averted, that whatever one feeds the body, the mind, the soul upon will manifest itself in the face and features, character and conduct. "A man must be a masterpiece within before he can be a masterpiece without." "The show of their countenance doth witness against them."

The story of Rembrandt at two periods of his life is a striking illustration of this principle, working in two directions. As a youth he is described as "gloriously handsome." "The lamps

of love burn in his eyes; he radiates beauty and exhales strength; but having been untrue to himself he lost faith in others. The penalty of dishonesty and impurity is to believe that every one else is equally dishonest and equally impure." But in middle age Rembrandt is described as "shrinking, with an old rag around his throat, weakness in his chin, the mark of the beast upon his brow, the eyes heavy and dull."

What is the explanation of the two kinds of men found in the one? Only this: In his youth he lived by high ideals, noble impulses and lofty ambitions. In his strength he gave way to the powers of passion and lust and licentiousness and greed. It is a great law and it works.

The reaction of a life of prayer upon one's character is not the only possibility that prayer has, but it is one of the great probabilities of prayer. Of course, there are other tremendous values of prayer, but this one is not to be despised. Neither is it, on the other hand, the only value which prayer has.

There is also another law at work here. It is the law of influence by association. Jesus had lived and walked and talked and "fellowshipped" with the Heavenly Father until it radiated in His countenance and even His garments became "white and glistering."

It is not only the law of inward feeling working itself out, but it is also the great law of association at work. The teacher and his pupil live to-

gether and think together and study together, until the pupil is the reproduction of his master. "Like priest like people" is a well-known adage setting out the results of pastoral influence. The son is like his father, first, because he has his father's nature, but also just as much so because he lives with his father. This law is especially noticeable among husbands and wives who have been happily married for a long time.

I am thinking now of a happy old couple in Tennessee, who have walked life's way together, for around half a century. They struggled together in poverty during the devastating days immediately following the Civil War; they planned and dreamed and hoped together through those youthful times when they shared each other's strength in the prime of manhood and womanhood; they bore each other's burdens, shared each other's joys, enjoyed each other's pleasures and worshipped together at the family altar and in the house of God; they mutually bore the responsibilities of rearing and training their children. They lived together and walked together and sorrowed together and rejoiced together along life's pathway these fifty years. Now they sit in the evening shadows, but their love has grown stronger and purer and sweeter with each passing day. They are nearing the end of life's little race and it is more noticeable than ever that they look alike, talk alike, think alike and act alike.

The influence of each upon the other has woven itself into a composite character of the two.

Just like this, will the Divine influence of the Heavenly Father weave itself into the woof and fibre of the deepest being of that individual who lives in constant fellowship with Him. We are transformed by beholding.

Watch the faces of old people and it is very easy to discover those who have been prayerful. The giddy, godless unworshipful worldly life is seen in the hard, disappointed, ugly faces of old age. The prayerful, consecrated Christian life manifests itself in the sweet, sunshiny, beautiful faces of the old man or the old woman.

There is a transfiguration glory in prayer for every one who, like Jesus, avails himself of its opportunities.

IV

HIS PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."—*Luke* 23:34.

While He was hanging upon the cross Jesus spoke seven marvelous words. The words of this text are the first of these seven sayings. This first word was probably spoken before the cross was raised up and dropped into its socket in the rock. It may have been that just as they were bending over Him driving the nails into His hands and while His breath was hot in their faces that He said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

This prayer is the Lord's great intercessory prayer for sinners, just as John 17 is His intercessory prayer for saints. This is the fulfilment of the last verses of that great prophecy in Isaiah 53: "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors."

As we think of this intercessory prayer, His

prayer for the vilest of all sinners who were crucifying Him, there comes to mind also the great intercessory prayer of the Apostle Paul. He was despised and maltreated and hounded to his death by his own Jewish people, and yet he said, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." On another occasion he went farther and said, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

We are likewise reminded of Deacon Stephen, the first martyr, who "being full of the Holy Spirit looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God," upon whom the wicked persecutors ran with one accord, stopping their ears and stoning him to death. But good Stephen in the Spirit of his Lord and Master, "calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

The example of intercessory prayer for sinners which the Lord presented on the cross began to bear fruit early in Stephen, Paul and others. In view of these cases it is passing strange that there should be those among us, calling themselves Christians, who claim that there is no authority or justification for praying for sinners.

Many can recall that old-fashioned evangelistic institution known as the "mourners' bench" which was the reserved seat at church services for

such sinners as would occupy it as an indication of their desire for the prayers of God's people. The mourners' bench has not entirely departed from among us, but it is rapidly being succeeded by other methods of discovering those who have sufficient interest in their spiritual welfare to ask an interest in the prayers of God's people. However, there is no doubt that these things can be overdone. The most apparent danger in such requests for prayers for sinners is that the place of this prayer or the prayer itself may come between the sinner and the Saviour. If it is going to lead him to look to that prayer for his salvation, instead of to the Saviour, then it is a danger, because all the prayers in the universe cannot save a single soul.

The meaning of prayer for the sinner must not be misunderstood, either. The purpose of it is not to change the mind of God, nor to secure His willingness to save sinners. His mind is already made up on that question. He "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." Propitiation has already been provided and it is adequate for the meeting of every case. The only purpose of prayer for sinners is that God shall pour out the blessing already provided, and that He shall in the day of His power make the sinner willing to accept that which has been done in his behalf through Christ.

If we then are to follow the example of the Lord and of those first great followers of His, we must

unceasingly pray for sinners. God forbid that we should sin against them by ceasing to pray for them.

The spirit of this prayer of our Lord is wonderful. Here He is being done to death by the most heartless and cruel mob that ever maliciously maltreated any human being. He had done no evil, neither had He harmed any one. He had meant only to serve the highest interests of all men. They, however, for no other reason than religious prejudice, malice and envy, seize Him, go through a mock trial and subject Him to the most dishonourable and disgraceful execution known in the world. Notwithstanding all of this, in great generosity and magnanimity of soul He lifts up His tender plea to the Father to forgive them.

Is this not a demonstration of the Divine Spirit which dwelt in that frail human body? It is so far beyond and above what mere man would do that we cannot account for it on any other ground than that of essential Deity.

"Let a great prince die for a friend, and the world could never say enough about it; soon such a story of sacrifice would glow on the canvas, gleam in the white moonlight on the marble, and live on the page of history; but here is the sinless Lover of souls dying for His enemies, He is praying for them. Jesus begins to use His own cross by saving those who nailed Him to it."

The story is told of Le Clerc, a great critic, who one day was walking the streets of Paris and acci-

dentally trod on the foot of a young man. Immediately the young man raised his hand and struck Le Clerc in the face, to learn afterwards that he was blind. So it is sometimes when you hold a harsh opinion of a man and are angry with him, whereas if you would take the trouble to inquire you would find some defect that entitles that man to as much compassion as a blind man if he trod on your foot in the street.

To forgive one's friends is human; to forgive one's enemies is divine. To pray for our loved ones is natural; to pray for those who despitefully use us is graceful, that is to say, full of Divine Grace.

"Father, forgive them." Only God can forgive sins. Man can forgive injuries done to him if he have grace enough; but no man, no matter how good or great, can forgive the sins which another man committed against God. This is as unnatural and impossible as for one man to forgive the wrong done by another man to a third party.

Forgiveness of sins is God's greatest blessing. For the saint His forgiveness is offered on the condition of confession. "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." For the sinner His forgiveness is conditioned upon the sinner's acceptance of the work of Christ on his behalf.

Forgiveness with God also means forgetting.

"I will cover your sin as a dark cloud; I will remember them against you no more forever." To Him they are buried in the depths of the sea. "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19).

Visitors to the city of Odessa have witnessed an interesting scene on the first day of the Jewish year. Great numbers of the large Jewish population on this day wend their way toward the sea for the purpose of throwing the last year's sins into it, in order that they may enter the new year with a clean soul. They stand around in groups closely packed together in some places, looking into the water, reciting prayers or reading psalms. The groups are formed for the most part of listeners, with a man, and in a very few instances a woman—an old woman with spectacles on her thoroughly Jewish nose—reading to them. Some of the people turn their empty pockets inside out and shake them toward the sea, while others merely make a sign of throwing something into the water. This, to them, is the symbol of God's fulfilment of that promise to ancient Israel, that He will "cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

The plea which Jesus makes for the forgiveness of these persecutors is that "they know not what they do." Paul referred to this in II Corinthians where he expressed his determination to know

nothing among these Corinthians save Christ and Him crucified. His speech was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The wisdom of God and the wisdom of man are quite different. The wisdom of God is in a mystery, even the mystery of the cross "which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory."

These crucifiers were ignorant of the origin and character of Him Whom they were crucifying. They looked upon Him as some upstart from the north country that needed to be put out of the way, not knowing that He was indeed the Son of God.

They were ignorant of what this crucifixion would mean throughout the world, for its redemption and for its uplift. They were ignorant of the hidden mystery of Divine Grace and providence and predestination and sovereign purpose, the mystery into which the angels desired to look, but could not, which lay concealed in this act.

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

V

JESUS AT PRAYER IN GETHSEMANE

"And He came out, and went, as He was wont, to the mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him.

And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed.

Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done,

And there appeared an angel unto Him, from heaven, strengthening Him.

And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow.

And He said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."—*Luke* 22: 39-46.

Only a little while ago Jesus was surrounded by the shouting throngs who were crying their hosannas and vying with one another to do Him honour. Now He stands alone. Not even the closest and most intimate disciple is near enough to help.

Yesterday He was entertained with that gracious hospitality which He so often enjoyed in the home of the Bethany sisters. To-night He is not far from that home, for it is just over on the other side of the hill, but they who had so often been helped by Him do not now come to His help.

The crowds gradually dwindle away from Him. There is the shouting throng in the streets, then the curious crowds in the temple; then the hundred or so who were with Him when He started toward the Garden; then the eleven who arrived with Him at the gate; then the three who go with Him on the inside, and even these must fall by the wayside while He goes a little farther, where, in depressing solitude and loneliness, He treads the winepress of the wrath of God.

It was in a garden, the Garden of Eden, that man had lost his battle with Satan. It shall be won back in another garden, the Garden of Gethsemane, by the second Adam. Gardens have had much to do with human history, but no other garden ever meant so much as these two.

In this Garden Jesus is to spend His last night on earth. Where and how would you spend your last night on the earth? Would not much of it be spent in prayer? Canon Liddon made a great sermon on the subject "The First Five Minutes after Death." Dr. Frederick F. Shannon in a remarkable book of interesting sermons, "The Breath in the Winds," prefers to preach on "Life's Last Thirty Minutes." With whom

would you like to spend life's last thirty minutes? Jesus would spend this last night with His Father in the Garden. Of course, He takes along Peter, John and James, but intimate as they are with Him, being that sacred inner circle, even they cannot intrude into the sacredness of these last hours.

We see here the lonely Christ. There is nothing more pathetic in all of His life than His profound loneliness. There were but few who understood even a little about Him, and none who could fully sympathise with Him. Jesus was "the most utterly solitary man that ever lived." "There were none to praise and very few to love." Genius is always solitary. Who could enter into any fellowship with this most solitary and most sublime Personality of all the centuries? He towered like a giant of the forest, so far above all others that none could keep Him company.

"The little hills rejoice together on every side, but far above their smiling companionship the Alpine peak lifts itself into the cold air and though it be visited all night by troops of stars it is lonely amid the silence of the snow."

Oh, what pangs of unrequited love that lonely and loving heart must have felt as it yearned for the solace of an answering heart! Just over the hill was the home where Jesus had often found sheltering love and there were those whose sympathy and understanding would have meant millions to Him now, but He must stand alone.

But there is an exquisite pain which may amount to an inward joy over the thought of being able to bear life's burdens alone. And because of the loneliness of the Christ He is therefore enabled to become our Great High Priest, who can be touched with all the feelings of our infirmities, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. His loneliness makes it possible for Him to enter into fullest sympathy with those of us who may be lonely. If ever we are misunderstood or misjudged or misrepresented, if ever we are shunned or shied from we may find comfort in remembering that Christ also walked this way and is in fullest sympathy with us. If "our heart's burden of love is rejected, if empty because those who filled them are gone," we may find surcease from our sorrow in fellowship with Him Who long ago learned what this meant. If we find ourselves lost in the wilderness, but discover a bent twig or a blazed tree, we may know that other feet have walked that way and found their way out, and so may we, too.

Jesus in the Garden is also the humble Christ. He kneeled down. He prostrated Himself. He fell upon His face in devout reverence. Humility is a great grace. This humility of Christ's was "Love's bent knee." It is easy to kneel, to bow, to bend, to become humble, before one for whom love's deepest devotion and mightiest passion and holiest respect and devoutest reverence are felt.

If our feeling for God even approximated the emotions which some human relationships stir we would oftener find ourselves prostrated before Him.

In this Garden we see the Christ in conflict. It is that conflict which inevitably occurs when an acid comes in contact with a base. The acid of His spotless character now touches the base of Satan's degeneracy. It is the last satanic onslaught. In this Garden Christ met the final assault of hell. But the fierce winds which were hurled in such frantic fury into His face swept unbroken over His soul. It was the most terrible storm that ever swept over the earth. The blackness of the pit is let loose. The horrors of hell take hold upon His soul. The most horrible wolves of the pit are let loose upon Him. "Pain in its acutest sting and shame in its most overwhelming brutality are to be His."

From now until the expiring cry upon the cross nothing remains for Him on earth but the torture of physical pain and the poignancy of mental anguish. "All that His frail form could tolerate; all that human infamy could heap upon Him was now to be His lot."

What is His recourse? What could He do? He must brace Himself by prayer. And, oh, how glorious was that "paroxysm of prayer"! Let us not intrude too closely into this scene. Let us linger with Peter, John and James, a stone's

throw away. This incident is shrouded in a halo and mystery into which no human footstep may penetrate.

In the Garden we see the sorrowful Christ. Luke says, "He began to be sorrowful," and Mark uses the word "appalled." Until this time He had been the most joyful man the world ever saw. He was a handsome man, the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely. There were none of the marks of pride or passion or sin upon Him which deform men. Until this moment His face had shone with a glory which came from the consciousness of the rightness of His life with God. Joys unspeakable had been His portion, but now "He *began* to be sorrowful." Now begins the fulfilment of that descriptive prophecy, "He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." There is to be no more sunshine for Him, and the only joy He is to have now is the joy He is to have in anticipation of the coming crown which He will win by enduring the cross and despising the shame. "For the joy that was set before Him" He endured all.

There must have been a sad, far-away look in His eyes as He turned them up to the Father's face in this Gethsemane prayer. There must have been a shadow on His countenance darker than any that ever came upon the face of man. Oh, what hard heart can look upon that sorrowful man, untouched and unmoved?

In this Gethsemane prayer we see the crying

Christ. "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with *strong crying* and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared" (Hebrews 5:7).

There is no crime in crying. Washington Irving wrote: "There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are the messengers of overwhelming grief, of deep contrition and of unspeakable love." The tears of Jesus were "sweet tears, awful language, eloquent of uneventful affliction far too big." His tears were the "safety valves of the heart when too much pressure was laid on."

Jesus had rejoiced with them that rejoice and had wept with them that weep. When His friend Lazarus lay in the grave and Martha and Mary were in tears He joined His tears with theirs in sympathetic understanding. How comforting to know that He can cry with us when we cry. A little child came home from school and said to her mother: "I just love Marjorie more than anybody." "And why do you love her the most?" her mother asked. The child replied, "Because she cries with me when I cry." If we will just remember that Jesus cries with us whenever we cry there may be consolation for us that we have never before discovered. He is a sympathetic High Priest.

Here in the Garden "He filled the silent night

with His crying and watered the cold earth with His tears more precious than the dews of Hermon or any moisture next to His own blood had ever fell on God's earth since the creation."

This crying was also accompanied with bloody sweat which beggars all description. This is Luke's medical language, drops or clots of blood. Aristotle mentions bloody sweat caused from the blood being in a poor condition. Theophrastus mentions a physician who compared a species of sweat to blood. The torture of Christ's Spirit, the agony of His soul, the anguish of His mind, the intensity of His body, the burden of His heart, were all so inexpressibly terrible that every vein and blood vessel swelled to the bursting point and the pores of his skin oozed with crimson moisture.

Oh, what passionate praying was this! How can we ever learn to pray as He prayed? We cry "Lord, teach us to pray," and yet who will bear such a burden of prayer as this?

How terribly this prayer rebukes our own cold and heartless formalities; our mere making of speeches to God; our repetition of meaningless phrases, our saying of words when the heart and the spirit and the soul are not entering in!

"Lord, Teach Us to Pray!"

SECTION V: THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS AS GOD'S SON

SEEN IN THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN—
11:41, 17:1-28

SECTION V: THE PRAYER LIFE OF JESUS AS GOD'S SON

I

HIS PRAYER AT THE GRAVE

> "Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me.
>
> And I knew that Thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me."—*John* 11:41-42

The records tell of three times that Jesus had stood in the presence of death. Each time He reached out His hand to conquer it. But this time at the grave of Lazarus was the most touching scene of them all. Lazarus had been a devoted friend whom Jesus loved very tenderly. Jesus had many times enjoyed the hospitality of that home in Bethany. But now Lazarus is dead.

Jesus was far away when that illness, which was unto death, came upon Lazarus. There was an apparent strangeness in the conduct of Jesus at this time. When the message reached Him of His friend's serious illness He did not fly at once to

the bedside of the sick and to the comfort of the distressed sisters, as might have been expected. He lingered two days longer in the country where He was. This, however, is the way of that Divine Benevolence which sees the end from the beginning. Jesus knew what He would do, and this delay was not caused by indifference, but by the desire to demonstrate to the disciples and to all the people His Divine power. Furthermore, Jesus had come to destroy the works of the devil, and the devil's worst work is death. So Jesus would give the enemy all the advantage. He would give him the underhand hold in this mortal conflict and would then throw him. So when He does arrive at the home of Mary and Martha He finds that His friend has been in the grave four days. Many friends came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother, but no one meant so much to these mourning sisters as did Jesus. When He came the cry burst from Martha's heart, "If Thou hadst been here my brother had not died, but I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee."

Oh, that word, "If Thou hadst been here!" If Jesus were always present things would be different. "If Thou hadst been here" things would be different in the home, in the business, in the state. The presence of Jesus changes everything.

In His words of comfort He gives expression to

some of the profoundest thoughts of all His teaching. But with these we are not concerned in this study.

"Where have you laid him?" It must have been a deeply touching scene: "the outpouring of her sorrow; the absoluteness of her faith; the mute appeal of her tears." She answered, "Lord, come and see." What heart will remain unmoved at such a scene as this? Jesus was strong and brave and manly. He was called "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." He had lashed the money changers out of His Father's house. He had defied the Pharisees and Sadducees. And yet His stout heart could not bear up under this scene. "Jesus wept."

Not only did He weep with those that wept, but "Jesus therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave." That word *groaning* is a strong word. It occurs only three times in the Gospels. In every case it expresses a charge of remonstrance accompanied with a feeling of displeasure. Whether this groaning in the Spirit at the grave of Lazarus was meant as a rebuke to His own shrinking and as a summons to the decisive conflict with death; or whether it was meant to check that natural inclination to put forth the fulness of Divine energy at once; or whether it was an indignant condemnation of the hypocritical mourning of the Jews or a righteous wrath at the temporary triumph of Satan, we do not

know. But what we do know is that it was an expression of deep feeling, of indignant protest, of righteous wrath.

"What caused this indignation? Cannot we fancy how there rose up, as in pale, spectral procession before His vision, the whole long series of human sorrows and losses of which one was visible there before Him? He saw, in the one individual case, the whole race of man. He saw the whole mass represented there, the ocean in the drop, and He looked beyond the fact and linked it with its cause. And there rose before Him the reality of man's desolation through sin and the thought that all this misery, loss, pain, parting, death, was a contradiction of the Divine purpose, and an interruption of God's order, and that it had all been pulled down upon men's desperate heads by their own evil and their own folly. There rose in His heart the anger which is part of the perfectness of humanity when it looks upon sorrow linked by adamantine chains with sin."

What a tremendously arresting scene is this. Heartbroken sisters, distressed disciples, weeping friends, curious onlookers, the closed grave. And in the midst of it all stands the Son of man and the Son of God. He is the sole source of help for every one. Without Him they can do nothing. What will He do? What can He do? Once more prayer must come to His aid. It is His sole resource.

"And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father,

I thank Thee." Even at the grave He will sing no dirge of despair. At the grave His prayer shall be one of thanksgiving. At the grave He will praise God.

There are many things for which to be thankful, even at the grave. If it is the grave of a child we can thank God that He sent it at all to bless the home like some fragrant flower that blooms only for a while and then vanishes; if it is an old person we can thank God for having spared the life as long as He did. In whatever case, instead of complaining and rebelling for the going away of the loved ones God should be thanked for having sent them at all.

But what is it that Jesus is thankful for at the grave of Lazarus? "I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me." Back in Perea, when the news of Lazarus' sickness reached Jesus, He had prayed, and in that prayer His Father no doubt had given Him the assurance that the thing should be done even as He had requested. That God hears and answers prayer is an occasion for the devoutest thanks and loftiest praise. Oh, how good is that God whose ear is always open to the cry of His child and who really does answer prayer. Jacob discovered this at Jabbok and it made a new man of him. He was ever afterwards to be known as Israel, a prince who had prevailed. Moses discovered at the burning bush that God answers prayer and it gave him strength to save a nation of slaves. Elijah found at Cherith that his God

could answer prayer, and with that assurance he walked to the top of Carmel with the conscious tread of a conquerer. He laughed at the prophets of Baal whose god could not hear and answer, and then put them to rout by calling upon his God who answered by fire. All of these and many thousands since then can join Jesus in saying, "I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me."

But this prayer of Jesus takes another great step forward and says, "Thou hearest me always." He could say, "Thou hearest me always," because in His prayer life there were none of those hindrances to prayer which are specified in the Scriptures as the explanation for so much of our own unanswered prayer.

Selfishness is the first and greatest hindrance. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your own pleasures" (James 4:3).

Sin is a great hindrance to prayer. "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1-2).

Iniquity in the heart stands in the way of many a prayer. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalms 66:18).

Idol worshippers need not expect to receive anything of God. "Son of man, these men have

set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?" (Ezekiel 14:3). An idol worshipper is one who puts somebody else first and God second.

Enmity in the heart will block the path of prayer. "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if he have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses" (Mark 11:25).

Bitterness and unkindness in social relationships are barriers to prayer. "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (I Peter 3:7).

Refusing to hear and respond to the cry of the poor will stop the ears of God to our cry. "Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard" (Proverbs 21:13).

But Jesus had neither selfishness nor sin, nor iniquity nor idols, nor enmity nor unkindness, nor lack of charity in His heart or life. Therefore, He could say, "Thou hearest me always."

Furthermore, those Bible characteristics of prevailing prayer were always present in the prayer life of our Lord.

He could pray always *according* to *God's will.*

"And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us" (I John 5:14).

His prayers were unceasingly *persistent.* "And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

His prayers were in deepest *truth* and *sincerity.* "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth" (Psalms 145:18).

His life was beautifully *obedient* to the law of God. "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight" (I John 3:22).

Therefore, because He prayed conformably, persistently, sincerely and obediently, He could say, "Thou hearest me always." His was the prayer of the righteous man which availeth much in its working (James 5:16).

"Thou hast heard me;" "Thou hearest me always." What wonderful words! How much more wonderful that they are true! Oh, to be able to pray as Jesus prayed! always to be heard, and always to be answered.

But some of our prayers are so selfish and so foolish and so contradictory that they cannot be answered. God cannot answer both parties when two persons are praying for exactly opposite things. He may not answer either. But He will

answer the one who prays according to His will, for the best.

In this way we may pray as Jesus did and then be able to say, "always Thou hearest me." God does hear and answer every *real prayer*.

II

HIS INTERCESSORY PRAYER

John 17

In approaching this prayer of our Lord one feels somewhat as Moses did when he stood at the burning bush. This is holy ground and one should put off his shoes to stand here. In this prayer we enter the very holy of holies with the Saviour and see Him solemnly present Himself before the Father as the High Priest of His people. It is a Divinely sacred scene.

This prayer is the conclusion of the Lord's last moments with His disciples. It is the end of the discourse which begins in chapter fourteen and deals with the profoundest moral subjects. This prayer is the climax of the greatest discourse ever delivered by man or God. We cannot hope to fathom its depths nor scale its heights, nor to measure its length and breadth. We can only walk around it and look at it for a few practical lessons.

We could not agree at all with such declarations as that of Bulchneider which is approved by the German rationalist, Strauss, who speaks of this prayer as being "frigid, dogmatic, metaphys-

ical." Our deepest spiritual instincts recoil from such expressions.

It were easier to agree with Benge, who speaks of this prayer as "the most simple in words and the most profound in sense"; or to agree with Luther, who says, "Plain and simple as it sounds, it is so deep and rich and broad that no man can fathom it."

Alexander McLaren expresses the feeling of us all, that "we may well despair of doing justice to the deep thoughts of this prayer which volumes would not exhaust."

However, here we are at this place in the prayer life of our Lord and we will take a little excursion into it, not refusing whatever blessing there may be in it simply because we cannot get it all.

There might be great interest in a study of the theology of this prayer. There are two times when one's theology is always sound: when he prays, and when he writes hymns.

Some of the greatest and best hymns have been written by the unsoundest theologians, because when the heart is borne upward into such fellowship with God as to enable one to sing "Nearer my God to Thee," his Unitarianism is forgotten and left behind. Thus it is also in prayer. That theology which is born in the deepest devotion of a prayerful spirit can be depended upon. It is one of the strange and paradoxical coincidences of present-day upheavals in the theological world, that one of the best books ever written on the

subject of prayer should have for its foundation the prayers of those great saints of the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and that the writer of this book should now be turning around to kick over the very theology which came out of those prayers.

The theology of this prayer of Jesus brings out such doctrines as His deity (v. 1); His pre-existence (v. 5); the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures (v. 8); and God's electing grace (v. 2).

A further preliminary consideration of this prayer should include its construction. It moves in rhythmic cadences and in harmonic transitions from beginning to end. It is built up, thought upon thought, until it rises, pyramid-like, to its peak. It is definitely outlined and well organised as to its matter. Jesus begins with Himself (vs. 1-5), moves on to the eleven apostles (vs. 6-19), and on out to all the disciples who should ever come afterwards (vs. 20-24).

This raises the question as to whether it was a prepared prayer. How far should prayers be extemporaneous and how far should they be prepared? There are two extremes, both of which have their evils. Prayers which are found in printed volumes may have been real and vital when they burst fresh from the hearts that prepared them, but after many repetitions they are likely to become a mere repeating of words and no prayer at all. This is what Jesus condemned

in the Pharisees who thought that they would be heard for their persistent mumblings of certain phrases. On the other hand, for one to undertake to lead a public prayer without previous preparation or thought, is likely to result in a jumbling of words and phrases long since worn threadbare and in petitioning for a multitude of things, of which the one praying happens to think as he goes along. Herein is the danger of calling upon some one to lead in public prayer without previous notice. Both of these extremes have their dangers.

We certainly must say that if the example of the Lord is to be followed, His ministers will give careful thought beforehand to their public prayers. Whether they write these prayers out or not is another matter. Each public Sunday morning and evening prayer should have a great deal of thought and preparation. Why so much preparation on the sermon and so little on the prayer? I have been looking recently over a book of Spurgeon's prayers, and one thing that greatly impressed me was the definiteness of each prayer. One is for help from on High. Another is a word of thanks. Another is a prayer of praise for the wonders of Calvary. Another is a prayer for holiness; another for liberty. Another is a prayer to be like Christ. One is a prayer for more grace, and another a prayer for deliverance from evil, etc., etc.

All of these prayers would indicate much

thought beforehand as to what should be said.

A further consideration of this prayer would lead us to look into its language. Its words and phrases are unusually simple and dignified. There is nothing of the ornate, nothing of the oratorical in this prayer. The sentences are short and the words are simple. Moreover, the language is direct. It goes to the heart of the matter in mind. There is no superfluous redundancy.

THE PRAYER AND HIMSELF

In verses 1 to 5 Jesus is talking to the Father about Himself.

"The hour is come." That hour toward which four thousand years of human history had been looking with anxious longing; the hour when the hope of all nations was to burst forth in full fruition; the hour of human destiny: it is now come. All the light of the past streaming forward focuses on this hour and all the light of the future streaming backward focuses at the same point and the two meet. In this spotlight of the centuries stands Jesus Christ lifting up His voice in prayer.

He speaks of Himself as the *Glorified Son.* "Glorify Thy Son."

He stands here as the *Authoritative Son.* "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh." He is the Son of Supreme authority, for all power in heaven and in earth have been given to Him.

He is Lord over all. Not man's conscience, nor the church, nor yet the Bible, are authoritative apart from the personality and power of the Christ. He alone constitutes the court of final appeal in matters religious.

He is the *Life-giving Son.* "That he should give Eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." In Him was Life and this Life was the Light of man. He is the source of all life, physical, intellectual and spiritual. Apart from Him there is nothing but death and decay. He came that man might have Life and have it more abundantly. Wherever He lives, life flourishes in exuberant freshness. Individual life, family life, social life, business life—all are sweetened and glorified if He dwells there. Without Him life is a drudgery, it is a dying. Through Him is eternal life. Eternal life and immortality are two quite different things. Even the lost soul is immortal. What eternal gloom and desolation it will suffer in its separation from God. Only the saved man has eternal life and that life is in Jesus Christ, God's Son.

He is the *God-Glorifying Son.* "I have glorified Thee on the earth." His mission to this world was to unveil the face of His Father that all humanity might see Him and love Him. "No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him," literally, "led Him forth," that is, "into full revelation." Apart

from Christ God is conceived of as some horrible monster, some terrible tyrant, some self-avenging monarch, to be feared and dreaded and escaped, if possible. The gruesome and repulsive idols of the heathen are only expressive of the ideas of God which men have apart from Christ. However, in Christ the love and grace and tenderness of a Father are revealed and in Christ all may draw near to God, and God draws near to them. Jesus is the answer of humanity's long cry for God. In the dim and distant past Job cries out, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" This cry is echoed by Philip, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us." And all these cries are answered by Him who said: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." No man has seen God or known God who has not found Him in Jesus Christ. No man can fully believe in God apart from Christ. He is the God-Glorifying Son.

He is also the *Pre-existent Son.* "And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." "Before Abraham was I am." He is the Pre-existent, Self-existent, Future-existent Son of God, the Logos; without beginning of days or ending of years, Who was and is and is to be. The so-called "Lives of Christ" which we read are only the records of that small span snatched out of the eternities during which He journeyed here on the earth in the garment of human flesh.

A real "Life of Christ" must go far back beyond Bethlehem and stretch forward beyond Joseph's tomb.

In these brief verses we have compacted together an all-comprehensive view of Jesus the Saviour as He understood Himself to be and as expressed in the first part of this great intercessory prayer.

HIS PRAYER FOR THE ELEVEN

In verses 6-19 we have an ill-inclusive prayer in behalf of the Eleven. The first part of it is an expression of the Lord's joy which He has in them, verses 6-8.

In His expression of joy which He found in their behalf there are four things revealed as the occasion for this pleasure.

First, they were the Father's love-gift to Him. "Thine they were and Thou gavest them to me." "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world." These are the first fruits of the Father's promise, that the coming of His Son into the world should not be in vain. They are the foretaste of that fulness of glory which should come to Him in a redeemed earth. His heart is inexpressibly full of joy at this sign of the Father's favour.

Second, He found joy in their obedience, for: "They have kept Thy word." Obedient chil-

dren are an inexpressible pleasure. Disobedience brings grief and disappointment.

Third, they were informed disciples. "Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given me are of Thee." Jesus has no pleasure in ignorance. Knowledge is life, as well as power. To know God is Eternal Life. The best informed disciples bring the greatest joy to the Saviour's heart. Those who are careful students of His word and students of His work are a great delight. In His prayer He remembered to thank God that these Eleven were not ignorant but were informed.

Fourth, they were believing disciples. "And they have believed that Thou didst send me." Jesus finds joy, not in the doubtings and questionings of His followers, but in the confident trustfulness of them. How natural is this occasion for a prayer of praise. To be trusted, to be believed in, is our greatest encouragement and inspiration. Thus the Saviour found great satisfaction that these whom the Father had given Him believed.

In verses 9-19 He makes four earnest petitions for these Eleven. He first petitions that they may be kept through the name of the Father: "Keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me." While He was with them His personal presence sustained and supported them. Now that He is going away His petition is that

the strong right hand of His Father may still be upon these loved disciples, to keep them in unity and harmony and faithfulness.

In the second petition He prays that "they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." Jesus came to bring laughter and sunshine and music to the heart and home and life of all who would receive Him. He Himself was filled with the utmost joy. The darkness of the cross even could not dispel that inner satisfaction which came from the consciousness of doing God's will. Is it not written, "For the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame of it, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Now, His desire is that nothing shall destroy the joy of these disciples. How well this prayer was answered is indicated by such flashes of light from the Divine revelation of their future experiences as this: "They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ."

It is a badly mistaken view of Christ and His holy religion that His purpose is to take the "sun" out of "Sunday." It is sin that brings sorrow and not righteousness. Hilarity in temporary indulgence may abide for a moment, but sorrow cometh in the morning. The life that Christ offers is full of joy because it rests upon the only foundation that can produce permanent satisfaction. The godless, worldly man who thinks that he is having a good time need not pity

the Christian whose life is higher and deeper and fuller and richer and sweeter than any other life known to mortal man. The trouble with many is that they have just enough of Christ not to enjoy the world and just enough of the world not to enjoy Christ. Jesus wants and prays that all may be joyful, but He knows that the joy can come only from the fulness of a righteous life.

The third petition is that they may be delivered from evil, "I pray not that Thou shalt take them out of the world but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil." There is no particular value in a cloistered religion. The disciples are *in* the world but not *of* the world. He did not pray that they should be delivered from temptation, but that they should be strong enough to resist temptation. He does not pray that they may have no sorrow, but that they may have joy enough to overcome their sorrow. He does not pray that they may not suffer, but that they may be able to endure suffering patiently.

Two men who had been converted from a life of sin and shame were giving their testimony. One of them said: "I was a debauched drunkard, but Christ saved me and from that moment I have never wanted a drop of whiskey." The other man said, "I, too, was a drunkard and Christ saved me, but there has never been a moment since my conversion that my flesh did not cry out for drink, and yet I have never touched a drop since my salvation, because Christ has al-

ways given me sufficient strength to overcome the temptation." A great preacher remarked upon hearing these testimonies: "This last is the greatest of all witnesses for Christ." It is not the man who is not tempted that is a hero, but the one who, though tempted and tried, yet triumphs through riches of grace. He is God's greatest credential in the earth.

The Saviour's prayer for these disciples is that they may be holy: "Sanctify them through thy truth; and for their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

We need not be afraid of sanctification. Jesus prayed for it. Jesus desired that the disciples might have it; in fact, He Himself became our righteousness and sanctification. A sanctified person or thing is set apart for a holy purpose. These Eleven had been chosen and set apart for their high calling of God in Christ Jesus. But is there not something more in the act of sanctification than the once and for all and definite setting apart of one to a Divine purpose? Jesus said, "For their sakes I sanctify myself." By prayer, by daily consecration, by self-renunciation, by a sacred self-abnegation for their sakes He sanctified Himself. This is the highest of all appeals; "for their sakes."

"And as time went on, there was nothing in that Great Prayer the Apostles remembered more in their daily ministry than just this: 'For their sakes, I sanctify myself.' They remembered these

words every day, and they saw something of the unfathomable and inexhaustible depth of these words, as they worked out their own salvation, and the salvation of their people, in a daily life of increasing holiness and intercessory prayer. And those ministers of our own day are the true successors of the Eleven, who most closely imitate them in their life of sanctification; and that with a view of intercessory prayer. He alone deserves to be called a minister of Christ and of His church, who, on the day of His ordination looks around on his people and says, 'For their sakes I sanctify myself'; and more and more says it with every returning Sabbath morning. For their sakes, He will say, I dedicate and devote myself. For their sakes I keep myself at peace with God. I seek more and more to please God for their sakes. To please Him and to please them. For their sakes I sanctify myself. And what an incomparable sanctification that is, and what a shipwreck it is for any minister to miss it! What a complex, what a spiritual, what an endless, what an incessant sanctification! In every new sermon there is some new sanctification for a preacher and for his people. First and best for him; and then, after him, for them. Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth."

And what is here said about Christ sanctifying Himself for the sake of the disciples and His prayer that they may be sanctified for the sake of others and for the sanctification of the minister, in behalf of the people, may be said also with as great force on behalf of the sanctification of Sunday-school teachers for the sake of their pu-

pils and of parents for the sake of their children, and of all others in proportion to the measure of their personal influence and their consequent personal responsibility.

HIS PRAYER FOR OTHER DISCIPLES

Verses 20-24

In these verses our Lord's intercessory prayer sweeps out beyond Himself and beyond the Eleven, to whom His heart was so tenderly bound, and takes in the whole wide world of believing disciples who should follow in their train. What a wonderful prayer! What a marvelous inspiration! Here is where we come in. We may have felt that we were left out because we do not belong to that inner circle of the first small group. But, blessed be His Holy Name, He did not leave us out; but looking down the long vista of time, He cried: "Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."

There are two things upon which His heart is now set in behalf of all the disciples. First, that they may be one as He and His Father are One; and second, that they may be with Him where He is.

His prayer is not for formal union of organisation, nor uniformity of creed, but for unity of spirit; "that they may be one." Union has to

do only with the mechanics of things and may be nothing more than physical juxtaposition. Uniformity has to do only with the intellect and may mean nothing more than mere conformity. But unity has to do with the deeper and more meaningful things of the Spirit and means a spiritual oneness. I do not think Christ was ever deeply concerned with the mere mechanics of union, nor the conformity of uniformity, but He was concerned with a deep and deathless interest in the spiritual unity of His people. His prayer was that they might see, eye to eye, and face to face, and understand the same things.

The one very great reason for this devoutly to be desired end was, that the "world may believe that Thou hast sent me." On one occasion the world was looking in on the disciples and it exclaimed, "Behold, how they love one another!" And it is recorded immediately following that "many believed on Him." Jangling inharmonies among God's people; the nudging and elbowing of each other; attacks and counter-attacks are not very conducive to the producing of faith in Christ. "Behold, how sweet and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

The second petition of this part of His great intercessory prayer in behalf of the disciples is: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am."

What an assuring prayer! Can it ever fail of an answer? Will God the Father shut His ear

to this petition and refuse to respond? If one single soul committed to Christ is ever lost, then this prayer is unanswered; and if one part of Christ's prayer be broken, how do we know that any of it will be heard? But have we not already heard Him say: "Thou hearest me always"? Now, His prayer is that not one disciple, however weak or faltering he may be, shall ever be lost. It does not matter what miserable failures of the Christian life one may make, he shall not be cast out ultimately. He may lose his reward. He may have no crown of glory. There may be no welcome plaudit: "Well done, good and faithful servant"; and he may be saved "yet as by fire," but saved ultimately he must be and will be, because Christ died for him and lives to intercede for him, and prayed for him. What glorious safety and certainty!

The purpose in this part of the prayer is found in the words: "That they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me."

His glory is conditioned upon every one for whom He died being with Him at the last to behold that glory. And the certainty of every one being there rests upon the Father's faithfulness and not on that of the disciples. If one fail to be there it is therefore God's failure and not his.

An old Scotch woman who had been a consecrated Christian for years was on her deathbed. Just to test her faith, her minister said: "And, Mary, suppose when you die you should discover

that all of your hopes had been misfounded and that God had denied you?" With an undisturbed smile upon her face, she replied: "Oh, sir, my loss would be nothing compared to His loss, because I would lose only my soul, but He would lose my soul and His honour."

She was right about it. God's honour and Christ's glory are at stake in this matter. They have promised to save every soul who would trust them and if they lose one soul their honour and power are gone and they may lose all. If the devil can get one soul away from God he can get others. Then if he could get some and did not, they are saved not by the grace of God, but by the disgrace of the devil. Oh, who believes that it shall ever be so? We shall rest in the confident faith that Christ's prayer shall not go unanswered and that we shall all be with Him where He is.

What glorious inspiration in this intercessory prayer of Christ for us. It is good to know that there are friends and loved ones constantly bearing us up in their prayers before the Father. To have a band of personal intercessors throughout the country is a joy and unspeakable glory.

I stepped into my prayer meeting room one night when my people thought I was out of the city and as I entered they were in prayer. One of the deacons was saying, "God bless our pastor; clothe him always with power in his work; give him thy grace and wisdom for his tasks; encour-

age his heart by prospering the work of the Lord in his hands." That prayer gave my heart a great thrill. It was not said for my ears because he did not know I was present, but it was said to the Father. To have a praying wife and praying children is a great blessing. To have a praying father and mother is the very acme of earth's crown. To know that at a certain hour each evening a grey-haired mother from her invalid chair is pouring forth a torrent of petitions in behalf of the far-away son is inspiration and encouragement inexpressible.

But beyond all of these and above and better than any of them is the inspiring thought that while the Lord of Glory was here on this earth He spanned the centuries with His piercing eye and caught a glimpse of me, and understanding my weaknesses and my needs, lifted up His voice in earnest petition and prayed that, ultimately, I might be with Him where He is. Glorious prayer!

"Lord, Teach Us to Pray."

THE END

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